CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.
MAGNIFICENT SUPPLEMENT IN COLOURS.

1/-

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Echo by Edward Bissen (painting) January 1896
London's Danger by C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne February 1896
Pictures in the Fire by May Kendall (poem) February 1896
War on the Water by George Griffith February 1896
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A FLIGHT OF DOVES.

From the Painting by Mrs. Anderson. By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., London, W.

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ECHO

From the Painting by Edouard Bisson. By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., London, W.

THE first-class carriage we were in was heated by steam, we had each abundance of coats and rugs, our feet were on a fresh foot-warmer, but the draught of the hurricane crept in by a score of chinks, and the vehemence of the cold made us ache. At Doncaster we moved across to the Pullman car, and found that a trifle more endurable; but still I noted that Gerard's moustache continued to glisten with icicles.

At Grantham we had still further evidence (if such a thing were needed) of the lowness of the temperature. The express, which is timed to stop there only three minutes at the outside, made a wait that seemed interminable. The conductor, I saw, was getting uneasy. At length he buttoned his coat and went out into the freezing gale on the platform. In a minute he returned, purple-cheeked and blowing his fingers. He came to us with the tidings. Both driver and stoker of our engine were, it seemed, half perished with the exposure to that bitter cold; it was with difficulty they had brought the express to a standstill in the station, and they were utterly unfit to proceed further. It was doubtful, the conductor said, whether one of them, but I forgot which it was, would recover; and meanwhile the railway authorities were seeking substitutes to take us on to London. He said, too, that news had been brought down of a colossal fire in Hammersmith, but could add no details.

"Nice weather this for getting married in," said I; "if we'd had warning of this blizzard

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beforehand, I should either have shirked being your best man, or suggested having the affair postponed."

"If to-morrow's like this," said Gerard, "the wedding can't take place till the weather changes. It would be brutal to drag any woman out into such a nipping cold."

We saw men filling the engine with buckets from a well outside the station, because the ordinary water supply was frozen solid; and then the train began to move again, and slid out of Grantham into the open country. The south-westerly hurricane beat upon it till the flanges of the lee wheels grated upon the rails with a roar of sound; and in some of the heavier squalls I thought we should have been upset. A queer, lurid light hung in the sky. But with dogged slowness we crawled on, and drew up under the shelter of King's Cross station.

It was four o'clock, and we were three hours late. There was a bellow of life from the departure side of the station. I don't think I ever heard such a noise of trains and passengers; but where we were, the place seemed deserted. Half the roof was off, and there was not a porter to be seen. The platform was littered with dirty, trodden snow.

We got out, and I noticed that there were only two other passengers in the train. The conductor of the Pullman put out our luggage, and Gerard told him to order a hansom. There was only one on the rank—a thing that had never been known before since King's Cross station was built.

We got into that lonely cab, and told the muffled driver to take us to Queen's Gate, in Kensington. As the glass door was clattering down, a boy came out of some sheltered corner, and thrust in a paper.

"Evening paper, sir?" he cried. "There's half Chelsea on fire."

"Give him a penny, Methuen," said Gerard.

"No, sir," said the boy. "Five bob or nothing. I've only two papers left, and there's ten firemen killed. They say half London will be burnt."

I fumbled out two half-crowns, and the window closed down with a clash, and the cab drove off. Then I bent my head over the fluttering sheet and scanned the headlines. "*Disastrous fire.*" "*Fanned by the furious gale.*" "*All hydrants frozen.*" "*Every drop of water in London solid ice.*" "*Nothing to check the flames.*" "*Metropolis in terrible danger.*" "*Suicide of the Chief of the Fire Brigade.*"

The sky above us was full of driving blackness, but a strange yellow glare hung beneath it, and the print stood out clearly.

> "The fire in Hammersmith, which we reported in our last edition," I read, "has since assumed gigantic proportions. The united fire brigades of London are helpless to cope with it. The unprecedented severity of the frost, and the fury of the hurricane, which is now upon us, have set at derision all our vaunted precautions.
>
> "It is with water alone that our fire-extinguishing services have been hitherto armed to fight devouring flames, and now in this moment of our desperate need even a trickle of water is denied them. They are as helpless as the lay citizens.
>
> "The fire in its awful majesty has beat down all resistance. Hammersmith is a burnt out rubbish heap. West Kensington is a furnace. Amongst the dwellers in South Kensington and Chelsea there is more panic than an invading army could produce. So far as human eye can see, nothing but a change of wind or an act of God can save the greatest city ever built by man from being in the next few hours changed to twisted, smoking ruins."

Gerard dropped the paper with a cry of horror, and thrust up the hatch. "A fiver if you keep your horse at a gallop," he shouted to the cabman. "My God, Methuen," he said to me, "what an awful thing this is."

"The newspaper has made the worst of it for the sake of the sensation," I answered. "London is not built of wood; it is an impossible thing for the whole of it to burn."

"I'm thinking of Queen's Gate, and my little girl there. She'll have expected me three hours ago, and I'm here now."

The cab stopped with a jar against the curb. I scraped the frost rime from a window, and peered out. Five great dray-loads of household goods were coming thundering past us, with the horses at a gallop. We got beyond them, and entered Piccadilly. The street was one solid block of every imaginable kind of vehicle, bearing salvage and fugitives eastwards. With infinite trouble, our cabman wormed his way across the struggling mass, and tried to take us on our road by the smaller streets to southward; but these were

one and all brim-filled by the traffic, or blocked by broken-down vehicles

Gerard's impatience grew too great to be held in check any longer. He sprang from the cab, gave the man a ten-pound note, with orders to follow as best he could, and started off through the hurrying crowds on foot

Then for the first time we began fully to realise the fright which had bitten into five millions of people. The most orderly city on earth had turned into a seething nest of anarchy Even the police made no effort to quell the

"He sprang from the cab, gave the man a ten-pound note, with orders to follow as best he could"

terror or curb its lashings: they had their own houses and their own lives to think about. And as we went on, with the gale beating in our faces, we ourselves became smitten with the prevailing spirit.

We jostled and thrust at everyone that came in our way; we climbed over broken-down loads of rarities which lay in the roadways as though they had been so much coal. Three times I saw bodies lying motionless in my path, and the passers-by cursed as they stumbled against them, but no one stopped to help.

And once I saw a woman of elegant dress, who was driving a landau filled with trunks and boxes, drop the reins when a heavy dray cut off one of her wheels, and pull out a pistol and kill herself before a thousand lookers-on. But no one gave her more than a cursory glance. Each one looked ahead on his own path, and hurried away about his business, wrestling and thrusting amongst the others. And every minute the crush thickened, and every by-street vomited people.

The air grew warmer as we pressed on westwards. There was no glimpse of flame apparent yet; nothing but fat, black rolls of smoke could be seen overhead, with an underlining of yellow reflected from the distant blaze. And everywhere hung icicles, and the lines of the bursted water-mains glistened in the roadways. We were in an Arctic city more like St. Petersburg than the London we had known before.

There was the taint of burning in every breath we drew, and from the inky sky above fell a constant patter of charred embers. As we drew on, these embers grew bright, and by the time we were through Brompton (and seven had clanged out from some clock in the neighbourhood), live sparks were falling on the seething mobs in the streets, and the air grew sour with the smell of singeing cloth.

But by the time we got abreast of the South Kensington Museum, the glow of the flames was beginning to smear more lurid yellows against the amorphous black of the driving smoke clouds; and soon the thunder of the blaze and the crash of the trundling masonry came to us in a dim roar above the booming and swishing of the gale. The great warren of dwelling-houses to westward of us yielded up its thousand emigrants every minute. The fugitives had started out of home hugging their dearest possessions; but the din of that awful enemy which was sacking the city at their heels thrust terror into their hearts; and they had it taught them that to each one naked life is dearer than all else the world contains. So the streets were paved with the cream of the household goods, and we smashed with our feet a Jew's ransom with every mile we went.

The fire was advancing whole streets by the hour. Earl's Court was already half burnt out; the houses in a line with Cornwall Gardens and Emperor's Gate were beginning to yield up trickles of fire through their windows. The bright scorne from the volcano of fire fell around and on us more thickly as we pressed on. The mob thinned as we drew towards the seat of the blaze, and when we turned up Queen's Gate, the street, though half filled by furniture and *débris*, was almost deserted by human beings. The population had fled already. The gale was sending the flames horizontally, like the jet from a blow-pipe, across the house-tops.

Gerard by this time was nearly beside himself with anxiety and foreboding. But at last we reached the house, and Gerard dashed up the steps. The girl whom that morning he had thought to make his bride within the next thirty hours stood waiting for him in the doorway.

"Oh, my love," I heard her say, as she leant on his shoulder, "I am here alone. They have all gone. But you said you would come for me; and I knew you would if you were alive; and if you were not, I did not wish to live either."

But meanwhile the heat was growing upon us, and whilst I stood and watched, I saw flames beginning to spout from the upper windows of a house near the Cromwell Road.

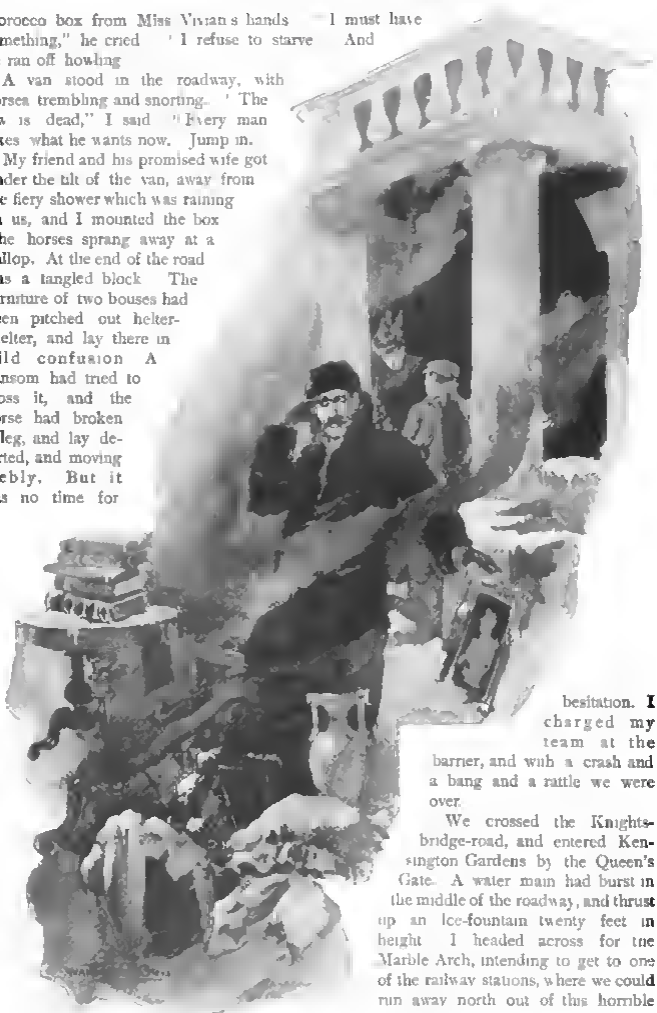
A swirl of smoke came up and stung my eyes like nettles. "Look," I said, "we must go. This house will be burning in another ten minutes"; and at the word Miss Vivian picked up a jewel-case from a table in the hall, and came with Gerard down the steps. We were walking quickly northwards, and as we were passing Queen's Gate-terrace a man joined us whom I knew. His name is an old and an honoured one, but I omit it here for the sake of others who have borne the title.

"Oh!" he cried, "I am beggared! Fifty-five and beggared! What is that you have?" said he. "Jewels?" He snatched the

morocco box from Miss Vivian's hands "I must have something," he cried "I refuse to starve And he ran off howling

A van stood in the roadway, with horses trembling and snorting "The law is dead," I said "Every man takes what he wants now. Jump in.

My friend and his promised wife got under the tilt of the van, away from the fiery shower which was raining on us, and I mounted the box The horses sprang away at a gallop. At the end of the road was a tangled block The furniture of two houses had been pitched out helter-skelter, and lay there in wild confusion A hansom had tried to cross it, and the horse had broken a leg, and lay deserted, and moving feebly. But it was no time for



"Whilst I stood and watched I saw flames beginning to spout from the upper windows of a house near the Cromwell Road"

hesitation. I charged my team at the barrier, and with a crash and a bang and a rattle we were over.

We crossed the Knightsbridge-road, and entered Kensington Gardens by the Queen's Gate. A water main had burst in the middle of the roadway, and thrust up an ice-fountain twenty feet in height I headed across for the Marble Arch, intending to get to one of the railway stations, where we could run away north out of this horrible city of fire and terror

But before we were half-way across

the parks the scent of fire came to us anew, and the horses began to snort with fresh terror. Bayswater was blazing, Paddington was on fire, and soon the fingers of the flames would be seizing Oxford Street in their awful grip. There seemed no chance of a respite. The gale raged more furiously than ever. I turned and made for Hyde Park Corner, and as we drove I saw no fewer than ten huge trees crash down before the straining of the wind.

But past Hyde Park Corner I could get the van no farther. The roadways were piled up to the doors of the houses on either side with a mass of vehicles, and alive with madly plunging horses. Never was known such a scene since the world began. And there they were doomed to wait, in that inextricable tangle, till the flames swept up and ground them into smoke.

We deserted our van, and hand-in-hand we skirted that awful block. We rounded Buckingham Palace Gardens, and got down to Victoria Street; but that was impassable, and we were forced to make our way through unconsidered bye-paths where the crowds were less densely wedged.

Only once was our slow struggle onward interrupted. Of a sudden the air was split by a terrific roar; another followed, and another. The pavement beneath us shook, and the tall houses on either side shed dust. The gale for a moment stopped, then hit us with a fresh blast which there was no standing against; and then a tornado of dust and fragments swept down so thick that we could barely catch a breath. They were blowing up a line of houses along the forefront of the fire, in the desperate hope that the flames would not leap the gap.

The crowd realised what had happened, and began to surge onward again. We fought our way along in its eddies. The exertion was something tearful, and for long enough I struggled on like a man in a dream, with one hand dragging at Miss Vivian, and the other wrestling with the people who thronged us. By a sort of dull instinct I was heading for the eastward. Hours must have passed—though they seemed like years—and when my weariness had grown so great that it seemed I could not drag myself a yard further, I became dimly conscious that we were in Northumberland Avenue.

By a sort of natural impulse, and without a word being said, we turned into the Metropole. The hall of the hotel was filled with a rabble which would have done credit to the Ratcliffe Highway, and I duly wondered what they were doing there. But then I caught a glimpse of my own self in a mirror. My clothes were burnt full of holes; with the smoke and the falling soot I was black as a man who had worked a week in coal; I looked a greater outcast than any of them.

It seemed useless to ask for a room; in fact, there were no officials visible; each bedroom was overflowing, and in the corridors the grimy tenants made a human carpet. At length, up in the attics (where fewer of the crowd had dared to go through dread of the fire) we found a tiny room with only half a dozen occupants. Miss Vivian shared the bed with two other women, and Gerard and I threw ourselves on the floor and huddled against the others for warmth.

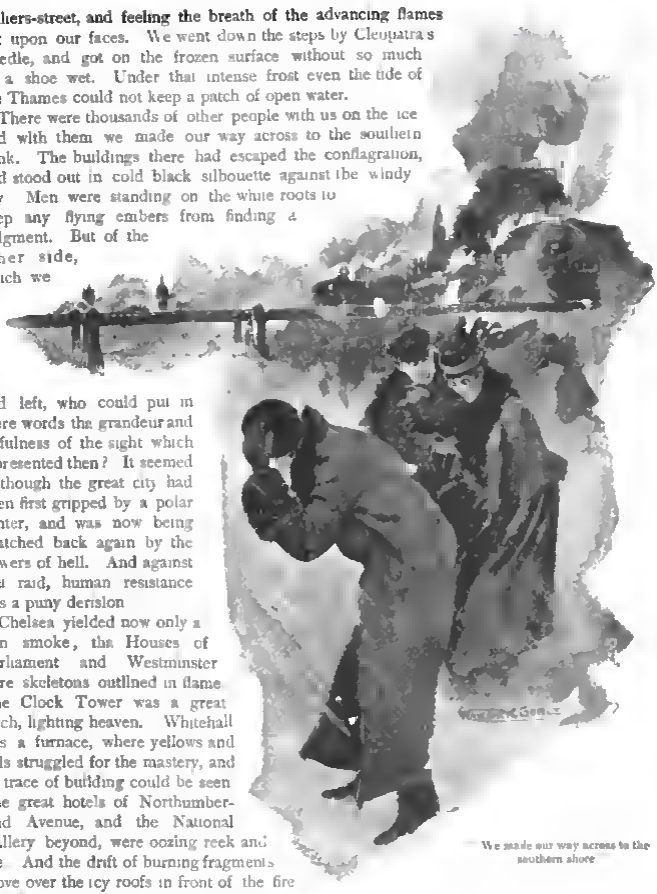
Sour-mouthed from want of sleep, I woke to the tune of splintering glass. Once more the fire was upon us. The gap of blown-up houses had done nothing to check its march. We roused the sleepers, and rushed to the stairways. Gleaming ice lay everywhere in the track of the bursted water pipes. The wind shook the great building as we ran towards the entrance, and the roar of the advancing fire re-echoed in the passages. A torrent of humanity was pouring out into Northumberland Avenue.

But I had no wish that we should be driven further eastward in that frightened sheep-pack before the wolves of flame. Retreat to the north was barred; we must get to the Surrey side; we must run somehow from this horrible city, where each in his blind terror was trampling down his neighbour.

We thrust our way through the crowds into Charing Cross Station, but the press was so great that the lines were blocked with writhing humanity, and no train could get in across the bridge. Then a thought occurred to me. The river was frozen, and we could make passage across the ice. We struggled back again, getting to the Embankment by

Villiers-street, and feeling the breath of the advancing flames hot upon our faces. We went down the steps by Cleopatra's Needle, and got on the frozen surface without so much as a shoe wet. Under that intense frost even the tide of the Thames could not keep a patch of open water.

There were thousands of other people with us on the ice and with them we made our way across to the southern bank. The buildings there had escaped the conflagration, and stood out in cold black silhouette against the windy sky. Men were standing on the white roofs to keep any flying embers from finding a lodgment. But of the other side, which we had left, who could put in mere words the grandeur and awfulness of the sight which it presented then? It seemed as though the great city had been first gripped by a polar winter, and was now being snatched back again by the powers of hell. And against that raid, human resistance was a puny derision.



We made our way across to the southern shore

Chelsea yielded now only a thin smoke, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster were skeletons outlined in flame. The Clock Tower was a great torch, lighting heaven. Whitehall was a furnace, where yellows and reds struggled for the mastery, and no trace of building could be seen. The great hotels of Northumberland Avenue, and the National Gallery beyond, were oozing reek and fire. And the drift of burning fragments drove over the icy roofs in front of the fire and lit two score new streets every hour.

We watched on as the blaze drove eastwards, and saw it bite the end of the Strand, and then from the great shelter of Charing Cross Station there came a stream of shrieks which made us shudder. That, too, had been ravished by the flames, and of the thousands within it, all who could not escape were being baked alive, or crushed by the falling roof.

But meanwhile the freezing gale sweeping down the reaches of the river was nipping us with a more real kind of chill, and I saw that Miss Vivian was almost fainting with the

exposure. Gerard said we must try and find some shelter, so we got ashore through a merchant's yard, and made our way to the Waterloo-road. Thus, too, was crammed with fugitives, but the terrifying scent of the fire was farther away, and the retreat was more orderly. We found a cab, and had nearly chartered it when two other men came up and bid against us. But we had the more gold, and the ride was ours. We were driven away to Dulwich, where Gerard had friends.

And that is the last I saw of the actual burning of London. We were bruised, all three of us, from face to foot; we were badly scorched in many places; we were bone-weary, and once a hospitable door closed behind us, our limbs stiffened, and we were incapable of further struggle. For five awful days the fire strode on and gutted the whole of the City and almost all North London; and the glare of it was seen on the Cheviot Hills.

It turned into crumbling ruins the Bank of England and the Tower; it blasted out of existence the slums which lie between Wapping High Street and the Mile End Road. It burnt the shipping and the warehouses, the shops, and the offices, the private dwellings, and the wooden pavement of the streets; and by one means and another it had caused the death of five hundred thousand of the population.

Yes; half a million human beings perished in that awful tornado of flame, or died of the subsequent exposure and want; three thousand thousand were changed from householders into homeless outcasts; but figures will give no idea of the vast amount of property that was blotted out of existence. Not only was solid, visible wealth wafted away in smoke, but that mysterious asset, paper money, shrank from millards into nothingness. The national credit was blasted, and the bourses of the outside world were smitten to their foundations. Civilisation has received no such shock since old Atlantis sank beneath the ocean waves.

* * * * *

And now we are face to face with the result. The awe-struck outer world had recovered its self-possession; we are still paralysed. The starving hordes of London have spread over the whole face of the fair land, and our towns bristle with riot. The other nations, forgetting their momentary pity, remember only their old hate. Shameful treaties are thrust upon us. Our colonies are being invaded. Trade has been reft from us. We are a nation with a glorious history, but no future.

New Chicago arose like a phœnix from the ashes of the old. But our London was no flimsy place of wooden joists and weather-boarding. It was a monument of centuries, and the nation is too heart-sick to begin again to build it on the old scale. The Government sits at Manchester, and the world mocks at it.

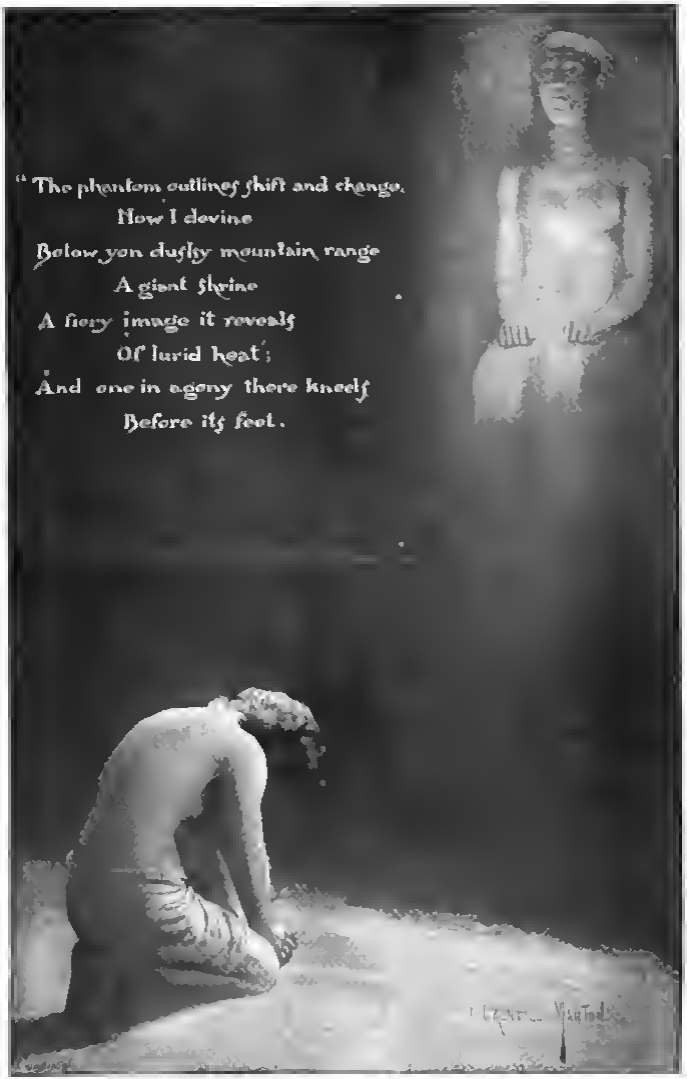
In the hour of our pride we boasted that no nation on earth could lay us low. But the elements were set to war against our might, and they have humbled the British Empire even unto the ground.

Pictures in the Fire

"The brief day darkens to the end: "I see two sullen birds that fly,
'The night is bleak With pinions slow,
How in the failing fire, my friend, Far off against a gleaming sky,
Our fortunes seek" As bearing woe"

"What seest thou now?" A desert land
That mountains keep
I see a lonely figure stand
Upon the steep.

It watches o'er the wide expanse,
As carved in stone
Averted is the countenance,
The form unknown.


"The phantom outlines shift and change,
Now I devine
Below yon dusky mountain range
A giant shrine
A fiery image it reveals
Of lurid heat;
And one in agony there kneels
Before its feet.

gaze the embers change and show
A king and queen
A royal canopy below
With royal mien

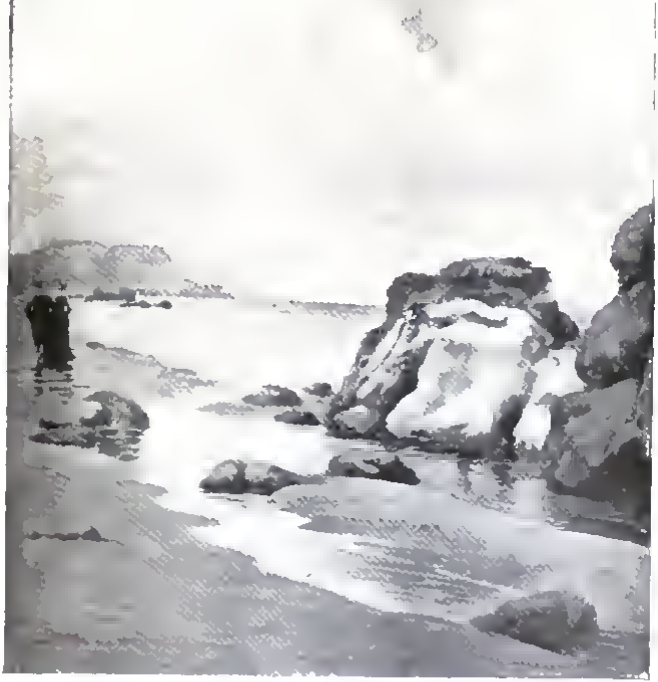
But haughty she her eyes are proud
His eyes look down
It is as though his head were bowed
Beneath the crown

Has altered is the vision bright—
A queen and king,
Most beautiful in robes of light
Lie slumbering.
Than aught of mortal mould more fair
Their rest is deep
I see a shadowy figure there
Who gravely them sleep."
A. Grenville Manton

"The snow is drifting at the pane
The night is cold
What in the embers may remain?"
"A sea of gold
There is an island in the sea
Within the glow
There are two walking—it may be
Two that we know

"Amid the dusky embers dies
That shining shore
And weary are my straining eyes
I can no more
No omen may the ashes hide
I only mark
A glimmer of that golden tide
Now all is dark."

May Kendall



An Attempt to Portray the Incidents of an Engagement between Two Great Fleets of Ironclads.

TO BEGIN with, and in order to make certain necessary matters quite plain to the reader, it must first be said that all which follows here is, in the nature of the case, little more than pure conjecture. Almost as well might a mail-clad knight of the sixteenth century, who had learnt the then unknightly art of using a pen, have sat down to write an essay on the effects of firearms in warfare, as may a man of to-day attempt to make an accurate forecast of the behaviour, offensive and defensive, of a modern battleship, either in a fleet action or a duel with an opponent of similar construction and fairly equal strength.

It has been well said by one who himself commands one of those almost miraculous combinations of destructive forces which we call battleships, that "the change from battle-axes and bows and arrows to firearms was not of a more revolutionary character as regards land warfare than is the change of the last fifty years from wooden sailing three-deckers, with their 32-pounder smooth-bore guns, to modern ironclads, as regards sea warfare."

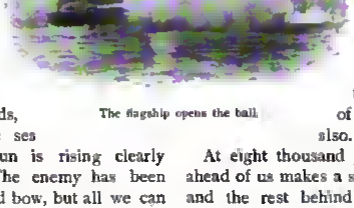
Marvellous, mighty, almost miraculous, as the modern battleship is, she is neither more nor less than the realisation in steel and iron of an almost infinite number of experiments. Naval manœuvres are all very well in their way, but only as a full-dress rehearsal of the grim tragedy of war, for there is not even so much likeness between the doings of the Red and Blue Squadrons and those of two hostile fleets meeting with the deadly intent to "burn, sink, and destroy," as there is between stage fencing with buttoned foils and a rapier duel to the death.

Then, again, the circumstances under which our hypothetical battleship is to go into action are, in the nature of the case, so varied that anything like a detailed consideration of all of them would form matter for a volume rather than a magazine article. There is the general fleet action—the Trafalgar or the Nile of to-morrow—the fight of the battleship supported by her attendant cruisers and torpedo boats against an enemy of similar force; the duel of battleship with battleship; the pitched battle by day; the stealthy night attack, and so on through all the hundred

and one combinations that the chances of war might bring about, and of these only one can be chosen here, and that, as I have said, a purely imaginary one.

Let us, then, suppose that we are standing in the spirit—and may the kindly Fates forefend that either you or I should ever stand there in the flesh—on the navigating bridge of H.M.S. *Hypothesis*, a first-class battleship of the newest, and therefore, let us hope, the most formidable type, at the moment of the flying of the momentous signal, "Enemy in sight; prepare to engage."

We are steaming at ten knots in column of line ahead, that is to say, the ships are drawn out in a long line, each following the other, stem on, at a distance of two cables, or four hundred yards, from each other. The sea is smooth, and the sun is rising clearly on our port beam. The enemy has been sighted on the starboard bow, but all we can see of him from the bridge is a long, hazy-looking cloud of smoke, but our cruisers, the eyes and ears of our fleet, have been scouting all night, and the number and formation of the enemy are already pretty accurately known to the Admiral.



The flagship opens the ball.

A new signal flies from the flag-ship, and the long line swings round in a vast curve until our bows point to the enemy and our sterns to the sun. This is the first point in our favour, not quite as great an one as the "weather gauge" was in the old sailing-ship days, but still one well worth having, for the enemy's marksmen will have the bright glare full in their eyes during the first of the firing, while ours will aim undazzled at brightly-lighted marks.

There is no clearing for action nowadays. Many hours ago the great fighting machine has been stripped of every superfluity that could interfere with the working of the guns, which now, as before, will begin and perhaps decide the fight.

Soon we hear the engines throbbing harder and the beat of the screws increasing in speed and power. The curling swirl of the water against the stem and over the deep-buried ram rises and broadens, and every moment the great ship forges faster and faster ahead, until, impelled by force equivalent to nearly 14,000 horse-power, she is rushing through the calm before the battle-storm at a speed of seventeen miles an hour.

Ere long, masts and funnels rise out of the water ahead of us, and we see that the enemy is disposed in columns of divisions in line abreast, that is to say, his ships are arranged in line alongside each other, and of these lines there are two. It thus chances that the two formations advocated by rival theorists are about to be submitted to the arbitrament of the gun, and perhaps of the ram and torpedo also.

At eight thousand yards the flagship just ahead of us makes a sweep to starboard. We and the rest behind us follow suit, and reluctantly obey the order to slow down to the speed of our slowest ship. So at fourteen miles our long curving line sweeps across the front of the enemy, drawing nearer to it, until a great cloud of white smoke, pierced by a pale flash of flame, bursts from the nearest enemy's forward barbette.

A mighty splash and a cloud of spray show where a great 800-pound projectile strikes the water some hundred yards short of our line, and the next we see is the shell skipping harmlessly away over the water across our bows. That is the sighting shot, and it tells us as well as the enemy that the time has come for the game of long bowls to begin.

A second cloud of white smoke leaps from the forward barbette of the flagship, and the two sixty-seven tonners hurl their shells simultaneously into the midst of the enemy. A momentary flash far away tells us that one at least has found its mark, and that means that on something, armour or topwork or turret, the 800-pound mass of metal has struck with a force of some 40,000 foot-tons,

smashing its way through and bursting somewhere with devastating effect.

Now comes our own turn. With a roar and a concussion which convulses the atmosphere about us and sends a shudder through the frame of the steel leviathan, two of our great guns speak at once. An instant after comes a sharp, short, screaming whistle, a shock and a crash, and a swift blinding blaze of flame. A shell has struck us almost squarely amidships, but the tough nine-inch plate has held good, and the shell has burst without penetrating. A few feet higher it would have pierced the thinner armour of the twelve-pounder battery with results that we scarcely care even to guess at.

This is the first exchange of compliments, and now ship after ship, we steam across the hostile front amidst vast drifting clouds of white smoke, the almost incessant thunder of the great guns, and the crash, and shock, and shudder that tell when a shell has found its mark.

But all the while the two fleets are nearing each other, and soon through the deeper thunder of the turret and barbette guns ring out the sharper and more swiftly succeeding reports of the quick-firers from the batteries.

This means that a storm of hundred-pound projectiles, a very tempest of death and destruction, is being hurled amongst the enemy at ever-decreasing range, and so fast and fiercely is that storm raging that three projectiles from each gun will be continually in the air for several minutes to come.

"A shell has struck us almost squarely amidships."

But the enemy is as well armed as we are, and out of the dense smoke bank which shows our gunners where he is, comes another storm as fierce, though not as deadly, since much of it passes through the gaps between the links of our long-drawn chain, and through

"Her stern goes down . . . and, with a swift, sliding plunge, she vanishes into the depths below"

this we steam on, battering and battered as ships have never been before since the first gun was mounted on shipboard

All save ourselves have vanished from the deck The Captain, with a Commander and two signalmen, is in the conning-tower, the little steel skull which holds the brain and directing will of the vast fighting organism The gunners are in the turrets and in the batteries behind their walls and shields of armour. As for us, being where we are only in the spirit, it matters not where solid shot may strike or shell may burst, otherwise our condition would be parlous indeed.

As the range gets shorter, the awful din of the battle-storm grows louder and louder, and the hits come ever faster and more deadly, and at last the light armaments come into play. The harsh, sharp, grinding crashes and the thudding roar of the machine-guns swell the infernal chorus, and an incessant hail of lead and steel sweeps the ship from end to end, reducing to battered and shapeless ruin everything that is not protected by the solid armour of the sides and turrets and batteries The funnels are riddled like sieves, boats are torn into splinters and swept in mere shreds of wood and rags of canvas out of the davits, and all on board now must sink or swim with the ship as a whole

Suddenly a huge white form looms up through the drifting smoke only a few yards away on our bow Happily for us, our two sixty-seven tonners are intact and freshly loaded. The turret swings round, and the muzzles of the guns sink down. The mingled blast of fire and smoke leaps from them, and sixteen hundred pounds weight of metal plunges at almost pistol range into the foeman's side on the fore-quarter, where the armour is weakest

But no armour ever forged could have withstood the irresistible impact of that point-blank discharge. A great ragged hole gapes where a second before was the smooth white side; then, with a smothered roar, the great shells burst, the gash gapes wider, and a gush of flame and smoke pours out of it.

But almost at the same instant the guiding hand in the conning-tower has pressed an electric button A long shining shape leaps from our side, then comes a dull roar, and a mountain of white foam and water leaps up under the side of the stricken ship. She stops and shudders, and then her proud hulk leans slowly over towards us.

One last crash of artillery thunders from

her batteries, and just as our reversed engines drag us back, she rolls rail under, struggling for a few moments dumbly in the clutch of the waters that have claimed her for their own; and then her stern goes down, her bows flash in the sunlight, which gleams through a rift in the smoke, and, with a swift sliding plunge, she vanishes into the depths below.

Then over her grave we forge ahead again, but now with diminished speed and feebler fire, for in the game of modern naval war, he who wins pays only a little less dearly than he who loses. To the landsman's eye the great ship which, but a few minutes ago, was so trim and strong and perfect, is now little better than a shot-shattered wreck, albeit, thanks to our good armour, and maybe to our better luck, her vitals are yet untouched.

"A great gash is torn almost from our bows to the forward casemate"

The mighty engines are still smoothly exerting their colossal power, though our riddled funnels have somewhat reduced our effective steaming, but the sides and turrets and batteries, though gashed and scored and torn by the storm of shot that has rained upon them, are unpierced, and the guns behind them, with but few exceptions, are still workable.

So with every available gun loaded, and torpedoes ready to leap from the tubes on their errand of death, we sweep on to find a fresh antagonist. We have not long to wait, for the action has now become general, and it is a case of ship to ship till the last of the loser's craft has struck or sunk. The wind has freshened with the rising sun, and the smoke curtain rolls aside from such a scene of ruin as was never yet beheld upon the sea.

So far as we can see not a ship of either of the great fleets has passed unscathed into the zone of fire; not one but is battered and smashed almost beyond recognition; and, but for the flags still flying, some from the flag-staffs astern, some from signal yardarms, and some from stumps of masts and rims of fighting tops, it were hard to tell friend from foe. Yet the great guns are thundering on, the lighter artillery is roaring and flashing in incessant discharges, and still ship is seeking ship that she may destroy or be destroyed.

Right ahead of us a white leviathan is lying crippled. Perhaps a torpedo has struck her stern posts and wrecked her rudder and screws, for she is very much down by the stern, but the brave fellows on board her are working their guns manfully, and though she cannot run, she still can not only bark but bite.

Such a chance might not occur in a dozen actions, but here she is—a fair mark for the weapon which is the deadliest of all in modern warfare, if only it can be used. Deep down ahead of us, hidden by two fathoms of green water, is the terrible steel spur that has to strike but once, and behind it are the 12,000-ton dead weight of steel and the energy of the 14,000 horse-power engines, and now Leviathan must strike her flag or sink.

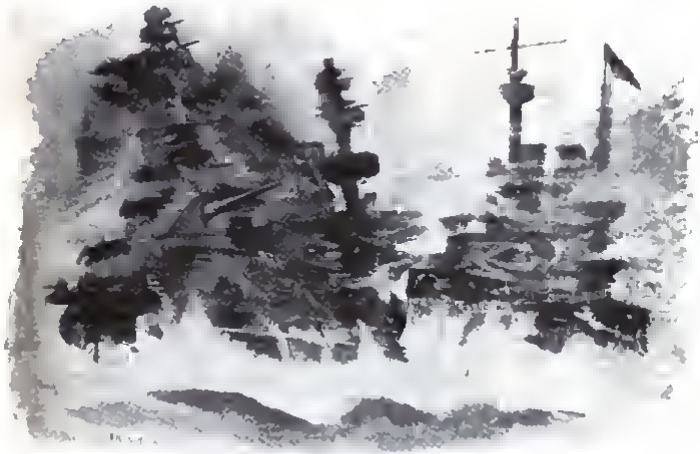
A message flashes up the wires from the conning-tower to the forward fighting top, and the signal "Will you surrender?"

flutters up. For all answer Leviathan's after-turret swings round, and the guns belch out their flame and smoke and shot together. The next instant a great gash is torn almost from our bows to the forward casemate, and the long, projecting chase of one of our fore-turret guns seems to melt away. Then from the inside of the turret comes a half-smothered sound; a rush of flaming smoke bursts through the grating, and the other gun remains dumb, though the spark has been flashed that should have fired it.

There is nothing for it now but the ram. The bells clang in the engine-room, the engines throb harder, the propellers whirl more and more swiftly, and the ship forges forward. Every gun that can be trained ahead pours its continuous stream of shot and shell on to the devoted but unyielding foe. Her guns, too, reply, but not for long. We are making nearly fifteen knots, and at that speed a few hundred yards are soon covered. So through the storm the great ship ploughs her way, terrible and resistless as Fate itself.

We see two bubbling streams converging along the water towards us. Under each a torpedo loaded with 500 pounds of gun cotton is rushing towards us at thirty knots an hour. If they converge upon us our ram will never touch Leviathan's side, but the chance of war is with us. We shoot in between the two streams, and the torpedoes speed harmlessly away astern. But Leviathan's decks are still a volcano, vomiting a storm of shot, great and small, and into this, with battered top-works and torn decks, we rush to strike the final blow.

Soon comes a dull, smothered crash and a mighty shock, and the huge bulk of the charging ship stops and shudders. Then she forges slowly ahead till her stem bores and grinds its way through the bulwarks and deep into the deck of Leviathan, now stricken to death. For a moment the two are locked in the death-grip; then the reversed engines drag us, jolting and trembling, out of the huge gap that our ram and stem have made. Leviathan's stern goes down, her bows, with the great, dripping, gleaming, cruel-looking ram projecting from them, heave up out of the water till she seems to stand almost on end, and then in the midst of a cloud of



"For a moment the two are locked in the death-grip"

"A long, low, narrow black craft, with red decks and flaming funnels [illegible]"

steam and smoke she makes her last plunge, and goes down to her death in the depths.

But before the engines can be reversed again we hear a fierce, breathless, panting sound on our quarter. A long, low, narrow black craft, with red decks and flaming funnels, dashes out of a dense cloud of smoke at a speed compared with which our best is a snail's pace. She rushes up to within two hundred yards of us. Two silvery shapes leap from her decks into the shot-churned water. It is a gallant deed, gallantly dared and done in the face of certain destruction.

A fierce fire from the tops.

Hardly have the torpedoes dived beneath the waves than a hurricane of flame and smoke and shot and shell and bullets roars out from our batteries and tops. The torpedo boat crumples up and vanishes in a cloud of steam and smoke. Then a volcano seems to open under us. Two mountains of foam-crowned water tower over us for an instant, and then burst with a thunderous crash over our decks and top-works. Stricken to death, the great ship stops and shudders like a living thing in her last agony. Then, with a sickening reel and swing, she lurches slowly sidewards and sternwards. A chorus of horribly confused sounds comes from the strongholds which are now to be the iron tombs of brave men, and just as the last enemy afloat strikes her flag, H.M.S *Hypothesis*—thank God as yet rightly named!—goes down to the grave that shall not be opened till the sea gives up its dead.

A PHOTOGRAPH of the INVISIBLE

By George Griffith

"Why, what is this, Denton, my friend?" said the Professor. "Your holiday doesn't seem to have done you much good. Have you had a fever or anything of that sort? You were looking a little worn out and run down when you went away, but, God bless me, you look more as if you had got up from a bed of sickness, than come back from a three month's yachting cruise in the Mediterranean."

"I dare say I do," said his visitor, taking his hand out of the Professor's and pulling from his pocket a little gilt-edged sheet of note paper. The Professor saw that it had been crushed up and smoothed out again. There was a pretty monogram in the top left-hand corner, and a faint sweet scent as of dried rose-leaves and violets rose from it as the pale, haggard, bright-eyed young fellow before him put it into his hands, and said:

"Read that, and tell me if you don't think it's about enough to knock a man over. May God—"

"Hush, my friend, hush!" said the Professor, laying his left hand on the other's shoulder, and holding the little letter in his right about six inches from his spectacles. "It is bad, but not bad enough for that, and gentlemen and men of science don't do that sort of thing, you know. So she has sold you, as the man in the street would say. Ah, well——"

"Sold me, sold herself you mean! Sold herself body and soul to that German Jew brute and his millions. Sold herself more vilely and basely than the most wretched outcast of the streets, for she has cold and hunger as her excuses, and Edith had a good home, an ample income, and a man who has loved her all his life to come to whenever she would, and she had promised to come, too. Is there any forgiveness for a sin like that, do you think?"

"That is not our business, my friend," said the Professor quietly; "and then you know I am enough of a pagan not to believe in the forgiveness of sins. Not here at least; the hereafter is another matter which is beyond our discussion. But in this world I have never seen sin and punishment as anything else than cause and effect, the one following the other as logically and as inevitably as a shock follows a blow."

"Good logic," said Denton with a short, savage laugh. "Capital logic from the physical point of view, but a trifle cold for my present frame of mind. Is that all the consolation you can give me?"

"I cannot give you any consolation, my friend, nothing but time and hard work can give that to a man in your state, but I might give you something else that would be more to your mind just now."

"What is that?"

"Your revenge. An idea that is something like an inspiration has just come to me. I can give you a revenge that shall be purely scientific, beyond the reach of all human law, and, I think I may say, absolutely unique. What do you say to that?"

"Tell me what it is, quick! I have been thinking all night and all day of nothing else. This thing has brought all the savage in me to the surface, and if I had all the arts of a Borgia, I believe I could use them just now without ruth or scruple. Now what is it?"

"Light a cigar and help yourself to whiskey and soda, and let me prescribe for once in a way to my own doctor. A combination of sedative and tonic is just what your present state of mind indicates," said the Professor, still in his dry, quiet voice, and pointing to a wide, deep arm chair on the other side of the library fire. "It is not a thing that I can make you understand in a minute, and, besides, a little enforced quiet, and a turn of your attention to something else, would do you all the good in the world."

"Very well. I'll be patient and you into it when I got home, and when I did I got *this*."

"Ah, well, that's no matter. I can soon make you understand all you need to know about it. It has been discovered, to put it shortly, that there are rays other than what we call light rays, to which some transparent substances are opaque, and some opaque substances transparent, and it has also been found that the photographic plate is sensitive to these rays. Ergo, by proper management it is possible to obtain a photograph of things invisible either to the eye or to the microscope."

"Read that, and tell me if you don't think it's about enough to knock a man over."

doctor for a bit, go ahead! Something new to think about would be a Godsend to me just now."

When they were settled in their chairs, and the smoke of their cigars was mingling about the mantelpiece, the Professor began:

"Of course you've heard something about this new photography of the invisible, as they call it, Röntgen's discovery, you know, with Crooke's vacuum tubes?"

"No, I can't say that I have, at least, nothing beyond mere rumours and newspaper paragraphs. I think it's all happened while I've been away. I did mean to look

"Wonderful, but hardly relevant, as far as I can see. What has the photography of the invisible got to do with my case and Edith's—Mrs Goldsberg's, I mean? Oh, look here, Grantham, I can't stand science now, I want revenge, and if you can give it me, just tell me what to do straight out."

"Very well, my friend, very well. I can see you are impatient, and no doubt naturally. We'll let the explanation go for the present. After all, it's no good trying to explain a thing like this to a man who can't sit still for a minute in his chair, and lets his cigar out before he's taken half a dozen whiffs. Come

into the studio and I'll give you an object-lesson."

This will be a convenient place to say that Professor Grantham, though a chemist and physical investigator by profession, was a photographer by hobby. Not a photographer in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather an excursionist in the outer and least known realms of the science.

He had practically solved the fascinating problem of chromatic photography, and as soon as he had perfected a few details of his invention he was going to astonish the world and make his fortune with it. He could photograph people with a ghostly double of themselves looking over their shoulder, and by means of photographs of a man and his parents, and his grandparents, he had produced a composite picture that was an excellent likeness of a remote ancestor, as proved by an ivory miniature that he had never seen.

Of course he never did this kind of thing for money, but as a matter of favour, and, for the sake of his pet art, he had now and then taken the photographs of some of the most noted beauties of Society by his unknown process and the results, with their exquisite blending of light and shade and tinting, were the pride and glory of their originals and the envy and despair of every professional in the world. It was a natural consequence that these favours should be most eagerly sought after, all the more eagerly because they were so few and far between.

He only strode up and down the room

When they got into the studio, the Professor turned a switch just inside the door, and lit a single electric light. In the middle of the room there was a camera, and in front of it, on another tripod just level with the lens, was a little black wooden box standing on its end. The camera had a cap of ebonite, and two curly electric wires ran up to each side of it from a battery on the floor. The Professor went to the box and drew a sliding lid off the top. Then he said to Denton:

"Come and put your hand inside here, and keep it there until I tell you to move."

"What are you going to do?"

"Take a photograph of your hand, that's all, but such a photograph! Ah, wait till you see it!"

The young doctor did as he was told, and the Professor took out his watch and turned a switch in the side of the camera.

"Now mind you don't move your hand, ten minutes will do it."

"Rather a long exposure, isn't it?"

"Yes, but necessary."

When the Professor's watch had ticked off the tenth minute, he said:

"Now you can take your hand out and go back into the library, and have another smoke and amuse yourself thinking about the justice of revenge while I develop the plate. Then you shall see the results."

Denton did as he was told, but when he got back to the library, instead of sitting down and trying to take things quietly, he only strode up and down the room with his hands clenched behind his back, chewing the end of his cigar and the cud of his bitter reflections, until the door from the studio opened and the Professor came in with a little square of glass in his hand.

He put it behind him, and as Denton stopped in front of him he said, much more seriously than he had spoken so far:

"My friend, do you remember what I told you after you had saved my little girl's life at the risk of your own by drawing the diphtheritic membrane from her throat through a quill? I told you if ever I could serve you you were but to ask and to have.

"Now you are in sorrow and in trouble, you have suffered the greatest wrong save one that an honourable man can suffer, and you have asked me for revenge. Very well, you shall have it, but in such a form that it shall be a just and merited punishment. This woman has committed a crime against herself and all

true womanhood, and to punish her you shall wound her in the tenderest spot in such a woman's being, her vanity and the vainglory which she takes in the beauty she has sold. You shall teach her, in a word—yes, and that millionaire purchaser of hers too, that that beauty is but skin deep."

"What in heaven's name do you mean, man? I've scarcely understood a word you've said to-night. For goodness sake speak a little more plainly and let me see what you are driving at.

"This," said the Professor, holding up the glass plate between Denton and the light of the electric chandelier that hung over the table. "There is your hand! Now, how do you think Mr. Joel Goldsberg would like a photograph of his wife done in that style, and how would *she* like it?"

Denton craned his neck upward for a moment to look more closely at the object on the plate. Then he started back, and stared at the Professor with a look of wonder that was near akin to horror in his eyes.

"Is that a fact, Grantham?" he almost whispered. "Is that really the photograph of my hand, and could you—— Oh, my God, no! It would be too horrible. She has done enough to make me hate her, and I do hate and despise her as much as I loved her a couple of days ago; but if I saw that thing I believe I should go mad."

"There will be no need for you to see it and on the presumably coarser natures of Mr. and Mrs. Goldsberg the effect would probably be nothing like so serious. She will be one of the beauties of England now that she is a millionairess. She will be only too glad of a suggestion, which can easily be managed, that I am willing to photograph her by a novel process. I will make a vignette of her—just the head and shoulders and bust, you know."

"Stop, man, for God's sake, stop! That's enough. If you tell me any more I shall relent and forbid you to do it—and yet she deserves it. After all it will only be a sort of scientific practical joke, I suppose."

"Yes, and I can easily say that some unforeseen accident that happened in the process has resulted in a scientific curiosity, and send it to her husband with my apologies and an offer to take her in colours, as compensation for the disappointment," said the Professor.

As Professor Grantham had shrewdly anticipated, Mrs. Joel Goldsberg, who had so unexpectedly scandalised her most intimate friends, and astonished the London world at large by developing, after an exceedingly brief courtship, into the mistress of many millions and the wife of an almost phenomenally homely and vulgar financier, jumped at the chance of having her undeniable and now universally lauded beauty portrayed in that wonderful guise which only he could give to it.

It is true that when the time for the *séance* arrived she was not a little mystified, not to say frightened, by the singularity of the methods adopted by the Professor, for she was photographed in absolute darkness, and the fact that the process seemed to take an unconscionably long time by no means made the ordeal easier.

But still she recognised that she was receiving a favour, and so, of course, there was nothing to be said beyond a few pretty little expostulations and expressions of wonder when the *séance* was over. Then she went away, taking with her the Professor's promise to send her the result of the experiment as he called it, as soon as the operations of developing and printing off were finished.

It was about a week later that a small flat parcel, marked "Private and with care," was brought to Mr. Joel Goldsberg as he sat at breakfast with "his young and lovely bride," as the newspaper reports of their wedding had justly, if tritely, styled her.

"I think this is the Professor's writing, my dear," said the millionaire as he looked the packet over; "so I suppose it will be that new photograph of yours."

"Oh, yes, I daresay it will," she said. "Let us see what it is like." And she got up and went and leant over her husband's shoulder.

He took off the brown paper cover, then a white paper one inside that, and then he raised the sheet of tissue paper that was gummed along the top of the card.

Neither of them said anything when they first saw what was underneath, but the blood

rushed to his face till it was almost purple, and died out of hers till it was grey and white and ghastly—the face of a corpse, but for the two bright, glaring eyes that stared out of it, and this is what those eyes saw.

The photograph seemed, as it were, to be in three layers—all transparent save the third. It was a vignette, just showing the head and neck and shoulders. The dress, a most dainty morning costume, in which she had elected to be taken, was perfect in pattern, but diaphanous and transparent. Under this were the skin and flesh, transparent also.

Above were her features, perfect in their likeness, and the wreathed crown of golden brown hair of which she was so proud, but they were the face and hair not of a living woman, but of a ghost, and, beneath all, sharp in outline and perfect in every hideous detail, a fleshless skull—her own skull—poised on the jagged vertebræ of her neck, and supported on the bare bones of her chest and shoulders, grinned at her through the transparent veil of flesh, and seemed to stare at her out of the sockets in which two ghostly eyes appeared to float.

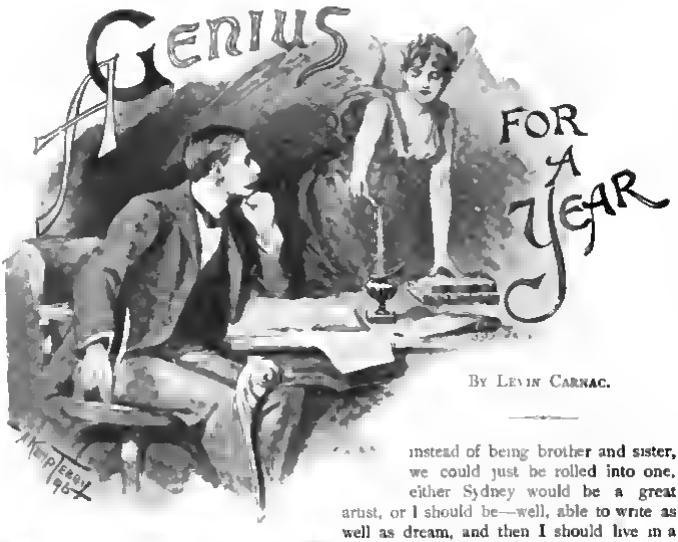
A day or two afterwards Society was startled by an amazing piece of news concerning the golden idols which it had most recently set up. Mr Joel Goldsberg had been suddenly struck down by some mysterious malady of a nervous character, and his newly-wedded bride had vanished utterly from the gaze of her worshippers. Later still it transpired, through the agency of an indefatigable society journalist, that her reason had suddenly given way from some unknown cause, and that she was now an inmate of a private lunatic asylum.

The blood died out of her face till it was grey and white and ghastly

"I have it on the best authority," concluded the paragraph in which the *Gutter Gazette* gave this piquant detail to the world, "that the unhappy lady's malady is of a most singular description. She imagines that she is a skeleton, and that her clothing and skin and flesh are nothing more than transparent shadows which everybody can see through. As a consequence her physicians are obliged at present to allow her to live day and night in a dark room, since the presence of the faintest light drives her instantly into a condition of the most violent hysterics."

[NOTE.—*Although this is of course a purely imaginative story, it may be as well to say that such photographs as that of Mrs Goldsberg have been shown by actual experiment to be possible. It is hardly necessary to add that what the Professor showed Denton was a photograph of his own skeleton hand in a shadowy outline of transparent flesh.*]

A Genius for a Year



By Levin Carnac.

"It's no use, Sturman, I shall never get it finished—at least, to my liking and Sylvia's. It's five years now since I made the first sketch for it, and there it is, complete in every detail as far as manual skill and technical knowledge can make it, and yet it's not a picture. There's something wanting that only genius can give it. The figures are correct, but they're not alive. There's no sight in their eyes, no movement in their limbs. No; it's not a picture, and I'm not an artist—only a successful illustrator, and that's all there is to be said about it."

"Except that Carlyle's definition of genius would hardly fit your case, for if ever mortal man had an infinite capacity for taking pains you have, March."

"Yes, Sydney would certainly be a genius if Carlyle had been right. I think the Fates have made a most aggravating division of the talents between us. They have given him the faculty of re-creation and almost perfect skill in execution, while they have given me the tormenting gift of dreams and denied me utterly the power of reproduction. Now, if, instead of being brother and sister, we could just be rolled into one, either Sydney would be a great artist, or I should be—well, able to write as well as dream, and then I should live in a heaven of my own creation."

"In which you would yourself be the brightest angel!"

The words slipped out almost before John Sturman knew that he had spoken them. His lips had of their own mere motion echoed what he was saying in his soul at the moment. They brought a just perceptibly deeper colour into Sylvia March's cheeks, and a faint flash into the deep grey eyes that were looking at his from under the straight, dark, finely-drawn eyebrows. Her brother saved her from the awkwardness of replying to such a speech from a man she had only lately refused, albeit in the friendliest fashion, to marry, by saying:

"That's not at all badly put for you, Sturman, though it seems to sound a bit queer from a man who defines poetry as the pearl of literature because it is the result of disease."

"I'm quite consistent," said Sturman, half smiling and half serious. "What I ought not to have said just now was the result of disease—heart disease!"

"Now you've made it worse," said Sylvia gravely.

"What? The disease? That couldn't be worse."

"Suppose we change the subject—or get back to our muttons," said Sylvia, looking more serious than her words. "Now tell me, have you ever heard a satisfactory definition of this something that Sydney and I seem to want so badly: this mysterious gift of the gods that people call genius without knowing what they are talking about?"

"No, I haven't; and if I did hear one it would probably be so far above my head that I should not understand it."

"That's only your vanity, Sturman," said March. "I think I've told you before that these aggressive assertions of mediocrity savour somewhat strongly of the pride that apes humility. But, to come to the concrete, I think there's something very like genius in this new book of Marcus Algar's that I'm illustrating. That fellow has a great future before him if his twenty pounds a thousand words doesn't make him greedy, and start him off writing himself out, as it has done with one or two others one could name."

"Or if he doesn't get the notion that he has a mission in literature, and take to climbing hills," said Sylvia demurely. "By the way, I suppose you haven't forgotten, Sydney, that the new genius is coming to tea this afternoon, to discuss those last sketches of yours."

"No, I haven't forgotten. Don't go, Sturman. No, you really mustn't. I particularly want you to meet Algar. Sylvia, tell him to sit down and behave himself. Ah! there he is. 'Talk of an angel,' etc."

A ring and a well-composed fantasia on the knocker sounded as he spoke, and a few moments later the door of the studio opened. As Sturman rose he saw Sydney go forward with outstretched hand to greet a tall, slightly built, perfectly dressed young fellow, fair-haired and dark-eyed, with the complexion of a boy and the face of a woman—at least it would have been a woman's face, he thought, but for a certain strength of brow and chin, and two little perpendicular lines between the eyebrows, which would not have quite become a woman.

This was Marcus Algar

This was Marcus Algar, *le succès de l'heure*, as they would have called him in France—the writer, unknown the day before yesterday, whose first book was selling in thousands, despite the fact that it didn't even hint at the seventh Commandment,

and hadn't a chapter that either the British Matron or the Young Person could condemn openly with a view to dwelling fondly on it in secret.

The reviewers already called their notices of his work "appreciations," and were almost falling over each other in their haste not to be last or least loud in his praise. Far-seeing editors were competing for his unwritten works, and literary agents were scheming subtly for the honour and profit of standing between him and them.

In a word, Marcus Algar was the man of the hour, as other men and women had been of previous hours. The Vagabonds had entertained him and the Authors had dined him—and John Sturman knew all this, and if he had had all the wealth of Kimberly he would have given it cheerfully to stand in his shoes, for did he not possess that priceless gift of literary expression, that God-given, unlearnable art, the want of which meant to him the difference between Sylvia's friendship, which had been his for years, and her love, which, as she had told him, could be given only to the twin soul for whose advent hers was waiting, the ideal she had not yet met unless—and as he looked at Marcus Algar and thought of that wonderful book of his, all the evil spirits that lurk behind the rose bushes in the Garden of Love seemed to come out of their hiding places and take possession of his soul.

He made his excuses and got away as soon as he decently could, because he wasn't the sort of man who could chatter cheerful trivialities when his soul was full of bitterness, and the earth's base seemed stubble and the pillars of the firmament rottenness to him.

He was a strong, straightforward, clean-hearted, clear-headed man, rich, well read and well educated, but with no more romance in his being than was inspired by his almost life-long and now hopeless love for the sister of his old schoolfellow and friend, Sydney March, this girl with the soft chestnut hair and big dreamy grey eyes whom he had worshipped as a boy and loved as a man, in his own plain, honest, manly fashion—only to learn, as he had learned but a few days before, that that wretched transcendental soul-theory of matrimony of hers was to condemn him to stand by and see her give herself to someone else just because he lacked the one faculty that she placed above all others.

It was maddening to be so near and yet so far, for, with the confidence born of their life-long friendship, she had even told him that she liked him so much "in other ways" that she really would have tried to love him if she could, and she had said this so innocently and so sweetly that it had hurt him more than the most scornful refusal could have done, for it did not even leave him the poor consolation of getting angry either with her or with himself.

If Mephistopheles had come to his side just then, as he was walking home from March's studio in Edith Villas, West Kensington to the big house in Bolton Gardens—which he had made so beautiful in the hope that Sylvia would one day reign over it—and offered him that one gift of Marcus Algar's in exchange for everything else on the usual terms, he would have struck the bargain there and then, *coute que coûte*, for Sylvia's sake—and yet, if he had only known it, Mephistopheles was a good deal nearer to his elbow just then than he had any idea of his being.

Altogether, his walk home was anything but a pleasant one, for, do what he would, he couldn't keep his thoughts from wandering back to March's studio, and picturing Sylvia and Algar wandering together in that magical Garden of Romance, which he could only look at over the fast-closed gate that only the key of Genius could unlock.

But when he got home there were two letters waiting for him, which speedily sent the lover into the background, and brought the man of affairs to the front. One was from Brindisi, and the other from Calcutta, but both had come by the same mail. The first was from his younger brother Cecil, who had been for the last three years in the Calcutta branch of the great firm of which John Sturman was the head, to tell him that he was coming home invalided, and the second was from a doctor who had attended Cecil.

There were four large pages of foreign note-paper closely covered, and when he got to the end, he turned back and read it over

again, and then he put it down and sat for nearly half-an-hour without moving a muscle, staring straight before him into the fire, and conscious of nothing but a single sentence, which he could no more get out of his brain than he could have helped hearing it if Mephistopheles himself had been whispering it into his ear:

"*Perhaps the most extraordinary property of the drug is the unmistakable power that it has of altering either the mental or moral character, and sometimes both, of its victims and making those under its influence the exact opposite of what they are in a normal state!*"

II.

It was a curious and perhaps more than usually merciless irony of Fate that Mephistopheles should come to John Sturman in the guise of his younger brother, and yet such was literally the case. The plain facts, as represented in the doctor's letter, were that Cecil had become a victim to the haschisch habit, and as soon as he had discovered this he had sent him straight home, knowing as he did that if he was to have a chance of rescue he must be almost constantly under the eye of someone for whom he had both affection and respect.

He had himself suggested his elder brother, the only near relation he had left, as soon as the matter had been put plainly before him, and he had been told that his one chance of life and sanity depended on his placing himself unreservedly in the hands of someone who could bring a strong, healthy mind and an unimpaired will to the task of supervising the gradual diminution of doses which, as it were, marked the milestones along the only possible road to a cure.

If Mephistopheles himself had been whispering it into his ear.

The doctor's letter had consisted for the most part of precise instructions as to the course of treatment to be pursued, and if it had not been for that one fatal sentence which had set John Sturman thinking so hard the afternoon he read it, all might have been well.

But there it was, and the work that it had begun was rapidly completed by the inevitable conversations which he had with Cecil on the subject of haschisch and its works. He kept the drug safely in his own care, measuring out the doses with scrupulous exactness, and noting with a fatally growing interest their effects on his patient.

Cecil would come down to breakfast dull and languid and headachy. He would take his three doses—each one ever so little smaller than the previous one—at ten, two, and six. At lunch he would be well and cheerful, and at dinner and all through the

evening brilliant in thought and expression, and then they would sit over the fire in the library and smoke, and Cecil would tell him of his visions, and weave stories splendid with all the gorgeous imagery of Eastern life, and then when Cecil had gone to bed he would sit on alone and think, and, unconsciously to himself, and before an atom of the drug had passed his lips, the subtle poison worked, and at last the struggle ended, and he yielded, almost before he knew that it had begun in deadly earnest.

He had been to tea that afternoon at the studio, and though nothing direct or positive had been said, he had intuitively felt that Sylvia was fast coming to the belief that in Marcus Algar she had at last met the twin-soul, the incarnate ideal for which hers had been waiting, and, from a remark or two dropped, perhaps purposely and with the kindliest intentions, by Sydney, that the young genius seemed also to have found his own ideal in Sylvia.

He went and looked over his own shoulder

Nay, he had even at the last minute put back the publication of his new book, and, with a few deft and masterly touches, had recreated his heroine in the living likeness of Sylvia, and in a few days more all the world would be at her feet, drawn there by the master-hand which had painted this other-self of hers so perfectly that henceforth she would live two lives, her own and the greater and brighter one that Algar's genius had given her.

It was this that had brought his struggle to an end. His rival, as he perforce regarded him, had drawn the magic circle of his genius round his darling, and so, in a sense, had already made her his own. What did it matter then to him, what became of the life that was henceforth to be a desert for him?

The enchantment of his hopeless love, turned all the strength of nature which should have saved him against him; and where a weaker man might have resisted through fear, he took the fatal step impelled by his own perverted strength.

The night after Cecil had gone to bed, he went to his cabinet, and took what was, for a beginner, a heavy dose of haschisch. Then he locked the door and sat down in his easy chair by the fire, to await results.

Soon a delightful languor began to steal over his physical senses. He closed his eyes and his mind seemed to become detached from his body. A great unearthly light shone into the darkness of the despair which had been clouding all his life, and, as the darkness vanished, the chains that had bound his intellect down to the commonplace, were loosed, and it rose at a leap into the long-forbidden, glowing realms of romance.

Then his eyes opened, and he saw a strange vision. One of those dream-stories of Sylvia's, which she had told to him in her halting, imperfect way, and which she would almost have given her life to be able to set forth in worthy language, came to him, brilliant and vivid, instinct with the poetry of the most exquisite realism. The characters sprang into incarnate being before him, with

such life-likeness, that he seemed to see and recognise them as though they had been old acquaintances, as they moved and spoke amidst the scenes that Sylvia had imagined for them without being able to reproduce them, and all was so real and vivid and beautiful that it seemed as though he were actually living in that vision-world which she would have painted if she could.

Why should he not paint it for her since he saw it so plainly before him? There was his writing-table and his chair ready for him. In his early clerking days he had learned shorthand as a convenience, and he had kept it up since as a hobby, and, however swiftly the glowing sentences might come to him, his pencil would keep pace with them.

He made an effort to rise from his chair and go to his table, but, before he reached it, it seemed to him that he was already there. It was curious, but he put it down to the effects of the drug, and caught himself wondering what was going to happen next. He saw himself sitting in the chair, and he went and looked over his own shoulder and saw the pencil already flying over the paper. Sheet after sheet he read as it was finished and thrown aside, and hour after hour he stood there reading and wondering what it all meant, until at last it was finished, and his other-self got up and looked at him.

He saw now that his face was ashen grey and deep scored with the lines drawn by intense mental effort. Beads of sweat were standing out thickly on his brow, and his eyes were burning with a fierce light that might have been either insanity or genius.

Then he saw his lips move into a faint and almost ghastly smile, and heard his own voice say to him, as though speaking from a distance:

"Well, that's a good night's work, and I think it's about time to go to bed. Good-night!"

Then his two beings seemed to fuse together again and become one. He lit his hand-lamp as usual, turned the gas out and went to bed and scarcely was his head on the pillow than he fell into a deep, heavy, dreamless sleep.

When he woke the next morning all that remained to him of his experiment in visions was a slight tightness across his forehead and a dim recollection of having dreamed a very wonderful dream. That the dream was a reality never occurred to him for a moment.

He got up half an hour later than usual, feeling a trifle repentant and perhaps just a little ashamed of himself, but thinking that, after all, he had got pretty cheaply out of what seemed to him now to be the greatest danger of his life.

He had breakfast with Cecil, as usual, and then went to the library. He found the door locked, a circumstance which struck him as being rather strange, and mechanically put his hand into his pocket for the key. It was there, and he opened the door and went in. On the threshold he stopped and started slightly, and then he looked round to see if anyone had seen him come into the room.

Then he went in and locked the door again behind him. His writing-table and the floor beside it were littered with sheets of paper.

He crossed the room and picked one of them up with a hand that was not very steady and began to read it. There could be no doubt as to what it was. It was a fragment of one of Sylvia's dream-stories written by a master hand. He read the page through, and then picked up some more at random, and went and sat down in his arm-chair by the ashes of last night's fire, and read page after page, disconnected as they were, and yet most evidently parts of one beautiful whole.

Then he laid them on the floor beside him, and strove to collect his thoughts so that he might read the riddle, and bit by bit the remembered fragments of his vision came together and took shape, and then the truth dawned upon him.

What the Calcutta doctor had said about the drug was true. Under its influence he had been the exact reverse of his normal mental self, and the net result of his experiment, as far as he could see, had been the division of his being into two separate entities, one of which was still the sober, practical, commonplace man of affairs, and the other the dreamer of gorgeous dreams, the genius dowered with the supreme gift of literary expression in its highest form and most perfect capacity—and yet for all that

an unreality, a spectre that came out of the darkness of a drug-induced slumber to work its wondrous spells and then vanish back into the shadows.

Only too clearly did he see this, for the more he read of his own work the more horribly apparent became the truth that, not to save his soul alive, could he in his natural self put two of those glowing, perfectly worded sentences together.

He got up and collected the sheets, and put them in order, and then read the story through from beginning to end. He had learned enough of the art by reading to see that it was a literary gem, enough even of itself to found a reputation upon, and this was his work—or at least the work of that other-self of his which the potent magic of the drug had called into being.

And if it had done this once why should it not do it many times? Here was Sylvia's own story glorified into a splendid reality, and by him! Was not this a proof that this other-self of his was in truth that twin soul which hers had, by her own confession, been waiting to meet and mate with?

He folded up the sheets and put them into his pocket. At eleven his brougham came as usual to the door, and he took them to the city and gave them to his confidential clerk to transcribe on his typewriter. That evening he paid a visit to the Studio, and asked Sylvia to read his first essay in fiction.

III.

Not quite a year had passed since John Sturman had made his first experiment in visions, and during those swiftly passing months he had lived on earth and in heaven, and not infrequently he had descended into the nethermost hell of human suffering. He had carried on his business affairs as of second nature, yet with an ever lessening interest in them.

That spectre-genius of his had won him fame with all its intoxicating accompaniments, and he had no cause to envy Marcus Algar now, either in his new art or his old love, for his own fame was fresher and brighter than his, and Sylvia, all innocent of its terrible origin, had welcomed the awakening of his long-dormant genius as a heaven-sent revelation, and so his latest wooing had not been in vain.

Sydney's picture, finished at last under his inspiration, was hanging on the line at Burlington House, the wonder and admiration of the thousands who had read the marvellous romance which he had woven round it, and for him the whole earth had been transfigured—until one of those inevitable hours came when he stood alone with his own reproachful and accusing soul on the edge of the deep, black, unbridgeable gulf at which the flower-strewn path of his love and fame must some day infallibly end, for that spectral other-self of his had to be fed every day with ever-increasing doses of the poison which ere long must slay both it and him—and then what of Sylvia?

His latest wooing had not been in vain.

They were to be married in a month, and meanwhile he was finishing the novel for which all the world was waiting. What was to happen? Would the remnant of his manhood and self-control compel him to save his darling from himself while yet there was time, or would he take her hand irrevocably in his, and lead her for a while along that enchanted path, knowing as he did what the end of the brief journey must be?

What his own answer to the inexorable question might have been there is no telling, neither is there any need to guess at it, for the Fates themselves answered it in their own way.

One night he sat down to write the last pages of his book. For a while the ideas came bright and thronging as ever, wedding themselves in harmonious union of sound and sense with the words which flowed so easily from his pen. Then, just on the threshold of the last scene, his pen stopped. The splendid vision whose realisation was to have been the crowning glory of his work grew dim and blurred and dull as the night-clouds from which the glory of the sunset has faded away. He stared about him, dazed and wondering like a man suddenly awakened from a dream. Then he turned back and read the pages he had just written, and could not even recognise his own work. He saw that it was beautiful, but it was utterly strange to him. Who had written it, and how did it come there on his table with the ink scarcely dry on the paper? He had forgotten.

Then his eye fell upon a few little greenish-brown lozenges lying at his elbow. A swift gleam of remembrance shone through the darkness that was falling on his mind like a lightning flash through sudden night. Behind him lay the path of his brief, dear-bought glory, strewn with flowers that now were withered, and before him the gulf, and beyond that a black infinity.

He gathered up the lozenges and swallowed them all at a gulp. Soon the fast-fading fires leapt up into a blaze of light, wild, lurid, and dazzling. Visions of chaotic splendour chased each other in headlong haste through the death-dance of his expiring senses. He had a dim consciousness of seizing his pen and driving it over the paper as though he were writing for his very life and more. Then, like the falling of a black pall before his eyes, came darkness darker than night, and he felt himself falling, bound and blinded, into immeasurable depths, through an eternity compressed into moments, and moments stretched out into eternities.

* * * *

When Cecil, now cured and hale and sane, came and found him in the morning, he was dead. The writing table was strewn with pages filled with the most piteous nonsense, and under the hand which still held his pen was the last page of all, half covered with an unintelligible scrawl and ending in a long, wavering line, which was the most eloquent of all the lines his pen had ever traced.

He felt himself falling, bound and blinded, into immeasurable depths.

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L'AMOUR EXIGEANT.

From the Painting by Lionel Royer

IN THE ABYSS

By H. G. Wells

THE lieutenant stood in front of the steel sphere and gnawed a piece of pine splinter. "What do you think of it, Steevens?" he asked.

"It's an idea," said Steevens, in the tone of one who keeps an open mind.

"I believe it will smash—flat," said the lieutenant.

"He seems to have calculated it all out pretty well," said Steevens, still impartial.

"But think of the pressure," said the lieutenant. "At the surface of the water it's fourteen pounds to the inch, thirty feet down it's double that, sixty, treble, ninety, four times, nine hundred, forty times; five thousand three hundred—that's a mile—it's two hundred and forty times fourteen pounds, that's—let's see—thirty hundredweight—a ton and a half, Steevens, *a ton and a half* to the square inch. And the ocean where he's going is five miles deep. That's seven and a half——"

"Sounds a lot," said Steevens, "but it's a jolly thick steel."

The lieutenant made no answer, but resumed his pine splinter. The object of their conversation was a huge globe of steel, having an exterior diameter of perhaps twenty feet. It looked like the shot for some Titanic piece of artillery. It was elaborately nested in a monstrous scaffolding built into the framework of

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the vessel, and the gigantic spars that were presently to sling it overboard gave the stern of the ship an appearance that had raised the curiosity of every decent sailor who had sighted it, from the pool of London to the Tropic of Capricorn. In two places, one above the other, the steel gave place to a couple of circular windows of enormously thick glass, and one of these, set in a steel frame of great solidity, was now partially unscrewed. Both the men had seen the interior of this globe for the first time that morning. It was elaborately padded with air cushions, with little studs sunk between bulging pillows to work the simple mechanism of the affair. Everything was elaborately padded, even the Myer's apparatus which was to absorb carbonic acid and replace the oxygen inspired by its tenant, when he had crept in by the glass manhole, and had been screwed in. It was so elaborately padded that a man might have been fired from a gun in it with perfect safety. And it had need to be, for presently a man was to crawl in through that glass manhole, to be screwed up tightly, and to be flung overboard, and to sink down—down—down, for five miles, even as the lieutenant said. It had taken the strongest hold of his imagination; it made him a bore at mess; and he found Steevens, the new arrival aboard, a godsend to talk to about it, over and over again.

"It's my opinion," said the lieutenant, "that that glass will simply bend in and bulge and smash, under a pressure of that sort. Daubrée has made rocks run like water under big pressures—and, you mark my words——"

"If the glass did break in," said Steevens, "what then?"

"The water would shoot in like a jet of iron. Have you ever felt a straight jet of high pressure water? It would hit as hard as a bullet. It would simply smash him and flatten him. It would tear down his throat, and into his lungs; it would blow in his ears——"

"What a detailed imagination you have," protested Steevens, who saw things vividly.

"It's a simple statement of the inevitable," said the lieutenant.

"And the globe?"

"Would just give out a few little bubbles, and it would settle down comfortably against the day of judgment, among the oozes and the bottom clay—with poor Elstead spread over his own smashed cushions like butter over bread."

He repeated this sentence as though he liked it very much. "Like butter over bread," he said.

"Having a look at the jigger?" said a voice behind them, and Elstead stood behind them, spick and span in white, with a cigarette between his teeth, and his eyes smiling out of the shadow of his ample hat-brim. "What's that about bread and butter, Weybridge? Grumbling as usual about the insufficient pay of naval officers? It won't be more than a day now before I start. We are to get the slings ready to-day. This clean sky and gentle swell is just the kind of thing for swinging off five tons of lead and iron, isn't it?"

"It won't affect you much," said Weybridge.

"No. Seventy or eighty feet down, and I shall be there in a dozen seconds, there's not a particle moving, though the wind shriek itself hoarse up above, and the water lifts halfway to the clouds. No. Down there—" He moved to the side of the ship and the other two followed him. All three leant forward on their elbows and stared down into the yellow-green water.

"*Peace*," said Elstead, finishing his thought aloud.

"Are you dead certain that clockwork will act?" asked Weybridge presently.

"It has worked thirty-five times," said Elstead. "It's bound to work."

"But if it doesn't?"

"Why shouldn't it?"

"I wouldn't go down in that confounded thing," said Weybridge, "for twenty thousand pounds."

"Cheerful chap you are," said Elstead, and spat sociably at a bubble below.

"I don't understand yet how you mean to work the thing," said Steevens.

"In the first place I'm screwed into the sphere," said Elstead, "and when I've turned the electric light off and on three times to show I'm cheerful, I'm swung out over the

stern by that crane, with all those big lead sinkers slung below me. The top lead weight has a roller carrying a hundred fathoms of strong cord rolled up, and that's all that joins the sinkers to the sphere, except the slings that will be cut when the affair is dropped. We use cord rather than wire rope because it's easier to cut and more buoyant—necessary points as you will see.

"Through each of these lead weights you notice there is a hole, and an iron rod will be run through that and will project six feet on the lower side. If that rod is rammed up from below it knocks up a lever and sets the clockwork in motion at the side of the cylinder on which the cord winds.

"Very well. The whole affair is lowered gently into the water, and the slings are cut. The sphere floats—with the air in it, it's lighter than water—but the lead weights go down straight and the cord runs out. When the cord is all paid out, the sphere will go down too, pulled down by the cord."

"But why the cord?" asked Steevens. "Why not fasten the weights directly to the sphere?"

"Because of the smash down below. The whole affair will go rushing down, mile after mile, at a headlong pace at last. It would be knocked to pieces on the bottom if it wasn't for that cord. But the weights will hit the bottom, and directly they do the buoyancy of the sphere will come into play. It will go on sinking slower and slower; come to a stop at last and then begin to float upward again.

"That's where the clockwork comes in. Directly the weights smash against the sea bottom, the rod will be knocked through and will kick up the clockwork, and the cord will be rewound on the reel. I shall be lugged down to the sea bottom. There I shall stay for half an hour, with the electric light on, looking about me. Then the clockwork will release a spring knife, the cord will be cut, and up I shall rush again, like a soda water bubble. The cord itself will help the flotation."

"And if you should chance to hit a ship?" said Weybridge.

"I should come up at such a pace, I should go clean through it," said Elstead, "like a cannon ball. You needn't worry about that."

"And suppose some nimble crustacean should wriggle into your clockwork——"

"It would be a pressing sort of invitation for me to stop," said Elstead, turning his back on the water and staring at the sphere.

* * * * *

They had swung Elstead overboard by eleven o'clock. The day was serenely bright and calm, with the horizon lost in haze. The electric glare in the little upper compartment beamed cheerfully three times. Then they let him down slowly to the surface of the water, and a sailor in the stern chains hung ready to cut the tackle that held the lead weights and the sphere together. The globe, which had looked so large on deck, looked the smallest thing conceivable under the stern of the ship. It rolled a little, and its two dark windows, which floated uppermost, seemed like eyes turned up in round wonderment at the people who crowded the rail. A voice wondered how Elstead liked the rolling. "Are you ready?" sang out the Commander. "Aye, aye, sir!" "Then let her go!"

The rope of the tackle tightened against the blade and was cut, and an eddy rolled over the globe in a grotesquely helpless fashion. Someone waved a handkerchief, someone else tried an ineffectual cheer, a middy was counting slowly: "Eight, nine, ten!" Another roll, then with a jerk and a splash the thing righted itself.

It seemed to be stationary for a moment, to grow rapidly smaller, and then the water closed over it, and it became visible, enlarged by refraction and dimmer, below the surface. Before one could count three it had disappeared. There was a flicker of white light far down in the water, that diminished to a speck and vanished. Then there was nothing but a depth of water going down into blackness, through which a shark was swimming.

Then suddenly the screw of the cruiser began to rotate, the water was crickled, the shark disappeared in a wrinkled confusion, and a torrent of foam rushed across the crystalline clearness that had swallowed up Elstead. "What's the idee?" said one A B to another.

"We're going to lay off about a couple of miles, 'fear he should bit us when he comes up," said his mate.

The ship steamed slowly to her new position. Aboard her almost everyone who was unoccupied remained watching the breathing swell into which the sphere had sunk. For the next half hour it is doubtful if a word was spoken that did not bear directly or indirectly on Elstead. The December sun was now high in the sky, and the heat very considerable.

"He'll be cold enough down there," said Weybridge. "They say that below a certain depth sea water's always just about freezing."

"Where'll he come up?" asked Steevens. "I've lost my bearings."

"That's the spot," said the Commander, who prided himself on his omniscience. He extended a precise finger south-eastward. "And this, I reckon, is pretty nearly the moment," he said. "He's been thirty-five minutes."

"How long does it take to reach the bottom of the ocean?" asked Steevens.

"For a depth of five miles, and reckoning—as we did—an acceleration to two foot per second, both ways, is just about three-quarters of a minute."

"Then he's overdue," said Weybridge.

"Pretty nearly," said the Commander. "I suppose it takes a few minutes for that cord of his to wind in."

"I forgot that," said Weybridge, evidently relieved.

And then began the suspense. A minute slowly dragged itself out, and no sphere shot out of the water. Another followed, and nothing broke the low oily swell. The sailors explained to one another that little point about the winding-in of the cord. The rigging was dotted with expectant faces. "Come up, Elstead!" called one hairy-chested salt impatiently, and the others caught it up, and shouted as though they were waiting for the curtain of a theatre to rise.

The Commander glanced irritably at them.

"Of course, if the acceleration's less than two," he said, "he'll be all the longer. We aren't absolutely certain that was the proper figure. I'm no slavish believer in calculations."

Steevens agreed concisely. No one on the quarter-deck spoke for a couple of minutes. Then Steeven's watch-case clicked.

When, twenty-one minutes after, the sun reached the zenith, they were still waiting for the globe to re-appear, and not a man aboard had dared to whisper that hope was dead. It was Weybridge who first gave expression to that realisation. He spoke while the sound of eight bells still hung in the air. "I always distrusted that window," he said quite suddenly to Steevens.

"Good God!" said Steevens, "you don't think——?"

"Well!" said Weybridge, and left the rest to his imagination.

"I'm no great believer in calculations myself," said the Commander dubiously, "so that I'm not altogether hopeless yet." And at midnight the gunboat was steaming slowly in a spiral round the spot where the globe had sunk, and the white beam of the electric light fled and halted and swept discontentedly onward again over the waste of phosphorescent waters under the little stars.

"If his window hasn't burst and smashed him," said Weybridge, "then it's a cursed sight worse, for his clockwork has gone wrong and he's alive now, five miles under our feet, down there in the cold and dark, anchored in that little bubble of his, where never a ray of light has shone or a human being lived, since the waters were gathered together. He's there without food, feeling hungry and thirsty and scared, wondering whether he'll starve or stifle. Which will it be? The Myer's apparatus is running out, I suppose. How long do they last?

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "what little things we are! What daring little devils! Down there, miles and miles of water—all water, and all this empty water about us and this sky. Gulfs!" He threw his hands out, and as he did so a little white streak swept noiselessly up the sky, travelling more slowly, stopped, became a motionless dot as though a new star had fallen up into the sky. Then it went sliding back again and lost itself amidst the reflections of the stars, and the white haze of the sea's phosphorescence.

Three things like shapes of fire

At the sight he stopped, arm extended and mouth open. He shut his mouth, opened it again and waved his arms with an impatient gesture. Then he turned, shouted "El-stead ahoy," to the first watch, and went at a run to Lindley and the search light. "I saw him,' he said. "Starboard there! His light's on and he's just shot out of the water. Bring the light round. We ought to see him drifting, when he lifts on the swell.'

But they never picked up the explorer until dawn. Then they almost ran him down. The crane was swung out and a boat's crew hooked the chain to the sphere. When they had shipped the sphere they unscrewed the manhole and peered into the darkness of the interior (for the electric light chamber was intended to illuminate the water about the sphere, and was shut off entirely from its general cavity).

The air was very hot within the cavity, and the indiarubber at the lip of the manhole was soft. There was no answer to their eager questions and no sound of movement within. Elstead seemed to be lying motionless crumpled up in the bottom of the globe. The ship's doctor crawled in and lifted him out to the men outside. For a moment or so they did not know whether Elstead was alive or dead. His face, in the yellow light of the ship's lamps, glistened with perspiration. They carried him down to his own cabin.

He was not dead they found, but in a state of absolute nervous collapse, and besides cruelly bruised. For some days he had to lie perfectly still. It was a week before he could tell his experiences.

Almost his first words were that he was going down again. The sphere would have to be altered, he said, in order to allow him to throw off the cord if need be, and that was all. He had had the most marvellous experience. "You thought I should find nothing but ooze," he said. "You laughed at my explorations, and I've discovered a new world!" He told his story in disconnected fragments and chiefly from the wrong end, so that it is impossible to re-tell it in his words. But what follows is the narrative of his experience.

It began atrociously, he said. Before the cord ran out the thing kept rolling over. He felt like a frog in a football. He could see nothing but the crane and the sky overhead, with an occasional glimpse of the people on the ship's rail. He couldn't tell a bit which way the thing would roll next. Suddenly he would find his feet going up, and try to step, and over he went rolling, head over heels and just anyhow on the padding. Any other shape would have been more comfortable, but no other shape was to be relied upon under the huge pressure of the nethermost abyss.

Suddenly the swaying ceased; the globe righted, and when he had picked himself up, he saw the water all about him greeny-blue, with an attenuated light filtering down from above, and a shoal of little floating things went rushing up past him, as it seemed to him, towards the light. And even as he looked it grew darker and darker, until the water above was as dark as the midnight sky, albeit of a greener shade, and the water below black. And little transparent things in the water developed a faint glint of luminosity, and shot past him in faint greenish streaks.

And the feeling of falling! It was just like the start of a lift, he said, only it kept on. One has to imagine what that means, that keeping on. It was then of all times that Elstead repented of his adventure. He saw the chances against him in an altogether new light. He thought of the big cuttle fish people knew to exist in the middle waters, the kind of things they find half digested in whales at times, or floating dead and rotten and half eaten by fish. Suppose one caught hold and wouldn't leave go. And had the clockwork really been sufficiently tested? But whether he wanted to go on or to go back mattered not the slightest now.

In fifty seconds everything was as black as night outside, except where the beam from his light struck through the waters, and picked out every now and then some fish or scrap of sinking matter. They flashed by too fast for him to see what they were. Once he thought he passed a shark. And then the sphere began to get hot by friction against the water. They had under-estimated this, it seems.

The first thing he noticed was that he was perspiring, and then he heard a hissing growing louder under his feet, and saw a lot of little bubbles—very little bubbles they were—rushing upward like a fan through the water outside. Steam! He felt the window, and it was hot. He turned on the minute glow-lamp that lit his own cavity, looked at the padded watch by the studs, and saw he had been travelling now for two minutes. It came into his head that the window would crack through the conflict of temperatures, for he knew the bottom water was very near freezing.

Then suddenly the floor of the sphere seemed to press against his feet, the rush of bubbles outside grew slower and slower, and the hissing diminished. The sphere rolled a little. The window had not cracked, nothing had given, and he knew that the dangers of sinking, at any rate, were over.

In another minute or so he would be on the floor of the abyss. He thought, he said, of Steevens and Weybridge and the rest of them five miles overhead, higher to him than the very highest clouds that ever floated over land are to us, steaming slowly and staring down and wondering what had happened to him.

He peered out of the window. There were no more bubbles now, and the hissing had stopped. Outside there was a heavy blackness—as black as black velvet—except where the electric light pierced the empty water and showed the colour of it—a yellow green.

Then three things like shapes of fire swam into sight, following each other through the water. Whether they were little and near or big and far off he could not tell.

Each was outlined in a bluish light almost as bright as the lights of a fishing smack, a light which seemed to be smoking greatly, and all along the sides of them were specks of this, like the lighted portholes of a ship. Their phosphorescence seemed to go out as

It was a strange re-illumined animal

they came into the radiance of his lamp, and he saw then that they were indeed fish of some strange sort with huge heads vast eyes and dwindling bodies and tails. Their eyes were turned towards him, and he judged they were supposed they were

Presently others of on down he noticed and that little specks This was probably due of his leaden sinkers

following him down He attracted by his glare the same sort joined them As he went that the water became of a pallid colour twinkled in his ray like motes in sunbeam to the clouds of ooze and mud that the impact had disturbed.

By the time he was drawn down to the lead weights he was in a dense fog of white that his electric light failed altogether to pierce for more than a few yards and many minutes elapsed before the hanging sheets of sediment subsided to any extent. Then, lit by his light and by the transient phosphorescence of a distant shoal of fishes he was able to see under the huge blackness of the super-incumbent water an undulating expanse of greyish-white ooze,

broken here and there by tangled thickets of a growth of sea lilies, waving hungry tentacles in the air.

Farther away were the graceful translucent outlines of a group of gigantic sponges. About this floor there were scattered a number of bristling flattish tufts of rich purple and black, which he decided must be some sort of sea urchin, and small, large-eyed or blind things having a curious resemblance, some to woodlice, and others to lobsters, crawled sluggishly across the track of the light and vanished into the obscurity again, leaving furrowed trails behind them.

Then suddenly the hovering swarm of little fishes veered about and came towards him as a flight of starlings might do. They passed over him like a phosphorescent snow, and then he saw behind them some larger creature advancing towards the sphere.

At first he could see it only dimly, a faintly moving figure remotely suggestive of a walking man, and then it came into the spray of light that the lamp shot out. As the glare struck it, it shut its eyes dazzled. He stared in rigid astonishment.

It was a strange vertebrated animal. Its dark purple head was dimly suggestive of a chameleon, but it had such a high forehead and such a brain-case as no reptile ever displayed before; the vertical pitch of its face gave it a most extraordinary resemblance to a human being.

Two large and protruding eyes projected from sockets in chameleon fashion, and it had a broad reptilian mouth with horny lips beneath its little nostrils. In the position of the ears were two huge gill covers, and out of these floated a branching tree of coralline filaments, almost like the tree-like gills that very young rays and sharks possess.

But the humanity of the face was not the most extraordinary thing about the creature. It was a biped, its almost globular body was poised on a tripod of two frog-like legs and a long thick tail, and its fore limbs, which grotesquely caricatured the human hand much as a frog's do, carried a long shaft of bone, tipped with copper. The colour of the creature was variegated; its head, hands, and legs were purple, but its skin, which hung loosely upon it, even as clothes might do, was a phosphorescent grey. And it stood there blinded by the light.

At last this unknown creature of the abyss blinked its eyes open, and, shading them with its disengaged hand, opened its mouth and gave vent to a shouting noise, articulate almost as speech might be, that penetrated even the steel case and padded jacket of the sphere. How a shouting may be accomplished without lungs Elstead does not profess to explain. It then moved sideways out of the glare into the mystery of shadow that bordered it on either side, and Elstead felt rather than saw that it was coming towards him. Fancying the light had attracted it, he turned the switch that cut off the current. In another moment something soft dabbed upon the steel, and the globe swayed.

Then the shouting was repeated, and it seemed to him that a distant echo answered it. The dabbing recurred, and the globe swayed and ground against the spindle over which the wire was rolled. He stood in the blackness, and peered out into the everlasting night of the abyss. And presently he saw, very faint and remote, other phosphorescent quasi-human forms hurrying towards him.

Hardly knowing what he did, he felt about in his swaying prison for the stud of the exterior electric light, and came by accident against his own small glow lamp in its padded recess. The sphere twisted, and then threw him down, he heard shouts like shouts of surprise, and when he rose to his feet he saw two pairs of stalked eyes peering into the lower window and reflecting his light.

In another moment hands were dabbing vigorously at his steel casing, and there was a sound, horrible enough in his position, of the metal protection of the clockwork being vigorously hammered. That, indeed, sent his heart into his mouth, for if these strange creatures succeeded in stopping that his release would never occur. Scarcely had he thought as much when he felt the sphere sway violently, and the floor of it press hard against his feet. He turned off the small glow lamp that lit the interior, and sent the ray of the large light in the separate compartment out into the water. The sea floor and the man-like creatures had disappeared, and

a couple of fish chasing each other dropped suddenly by the window.

He thought at once that these strange denizens of the deep sea had broken the wire rope, and that he had escaped. He drove up slowly, and rocking, and it seemed to him that it was also being drawn through the water. By crouching close to the window he managed to make his weight effective and roll that part of the sphere downward, but he could see nothing save the pale ray of his light striking down ineffectively into the darkness. It occurred to him that he would see more if he turned the lamp off and allowed his eyes to grow accustomed to the profound obscurity.

In this he was wise. After some minutes the velvety blackness became a translucent blackness, and

The sphere twisted, and then threw him down.

faster and faster, and then stopped with a jerk that sent him flying against the padded roof of his prison. For half a minute perhaps he was too astonished to think.

Then he felt that the sphere was spinning, then far away, and as faint as the zodiacal light of an English summer evening, he saw shapes moving below. He judged these creatures had detached his cable and were towing him along the sea bottom.

And then he saw something faint and remote across the undulations of the submarine plain, a broad horizon of pale luminosity that extended this way and that way as far as the range of his little window permitted him to see. To this he was being towed, as a balloon might be towed by men out of the open country into a town. He approached it very slowly, and very slowly the dim irradiation was gathered together into more definite shapes.

It was nearly five o'clock before he came over this luminous area, and by that time he could make out an arrangement suggestive of streets and houses grouped about a vast roofless erection that was grotesquely suggestive of a ruined abbey. It was spread out like a map below him. The houses were all roofless inclosures of walls, and their substance being, as he afterwards saw, of phosphorescent bones, gave the place an appearance as if it were built of drowned moonshine.

Among the inner caves of the place waving trees of crinoid stretched their tentacles, and tall, slender, glassy sponges shot like shining minarets and lilies of filmy light out of the general glow of the city. In the open spaces of the place he could see a stirring movement as of crowds of people, but he was too many fathoms above them to distinguish the individuals in those crowds.

Then slowly they pulled him down, and as they did so the details of the place crept slowly upon his apprehension. He saw that the courses of the cloudy buildings were marked out with beaded lines of round objects, and then he perceived that at several points below him in broad open spaces were forms like the encrusted shapes of ships.

Slowly and surely he was drawn down, and the forms below him became brighter, clearer, were more distinct. He was being pulled down, he perceived, towards the large building in the centre of the town, and he could catch a glimpse ever and again of the multitudinous forms that were lugging at his cord. He was astonished to see that the rigging of one of the ships, which formed such a prominent feature of the place, was crowded with a host of gesticulating figures regarding him, and then the walls of the great building rose about him silently, and hid the city from his eyes.

And such walls they were, of water-logged wood, and twisted wire rope and iron spars, and copper, and the bones and skulls of dead men.

The skulls ran in curious zig-zag lines and spirals and fantastic curves over the building, and in and out of their eye sockets and over the whole surface of the place, lurked and played a multitude of silvery little fishes.

And now he was at such a level that he could see these strange people of the abyss plainly once more. To his astonishment he perceived that they were prostrating themselves before him, all save one, dressed as it seemed in a robe of placoid scales, and crowned with a luminous diadem, who stood with his reptilian mouth opening and shutting as though he led the chanting of the worshippers.

They continued worshipping him, without rest or intermission, for the space of three hours.

Most circumstantial was Filstead's account of this astounding city and its people, these people of perpetual night, who have never seen sun or moon or stars, green vegetation, nor any living air-breathing creatures, who know nothing of fire, nor any light but the phosphorescent light of living things.

Startling as is his story, it is yet more startling to find that scientific men, of such eminence as Adams and Jenkins, find nothing incredible in it. They tell me they see no reason why intelligent water-breathing vertebrated creatures inured to a low temperature and enormous pressure, and of such a heavy structure, that neither alive nor dead would they float, might not live upon the bottom of the deep sea, and quite unsuspected by us, descendants like ourselves of the great Theriomorpha of the New Red Sandstone age.

We should be known to them, however, as strange meteoric creatures wont to fall catastrophically dead out of the mysterious blackness of their watery sky. And not only we ourselves, but our ships, our metals, our appliances, would come raining down out of the night. Sometimes sinking things would smite down and crush them, as if it were the judgment of some unseen power above, and sometimes would

They were prostrating themselves before him, all save one

come things of the utmost rarity or utility or shapes of inspiring suggestion One can understand, perhaps, something of their behaviour at the descent of a living man, if one thinks what a barbaric people might do, to whom an enhaloed shining creature came suddenly out of the sky

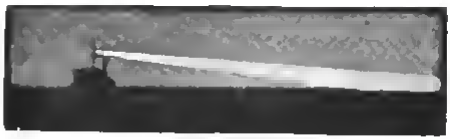
At one time or another Elstead probably told the officers of the *Ptarmigan* every detail of his strange twelve hours in the abyss. That he also intended to write them down is certain, but he never did, and so unhappily we have to piece together the discrepant fragments of his story from the reminiscences of Commander Simmons, Weybridge, Steevens, Lindley, and the others.

We see the thing darkly in fragmentary glimpses—the huge ghostly building, the bowing, chanting people, with their dark, chameleon-like heads and faintly luminous forms, and Elstead, with his light turned on again, vainly trying to convey to their minds that the cord by which the sphere was held was to be severed Minute after minute slipped away, and Elstead, looking at his watch, was horrified to find that he had oxygen only for two hours more But the chant in his honour kept on as remorselessly as if it was the marching song of his approaching death–

The manner of his release he does not understand, but to judge by the end of cord that hung from the sphere, it had been cut through by rubbing against the edge of the altar Abruptly the sphere rolled over, and he swept up, out of their world, as an ethereal creature clothed in a vacuum would sweep

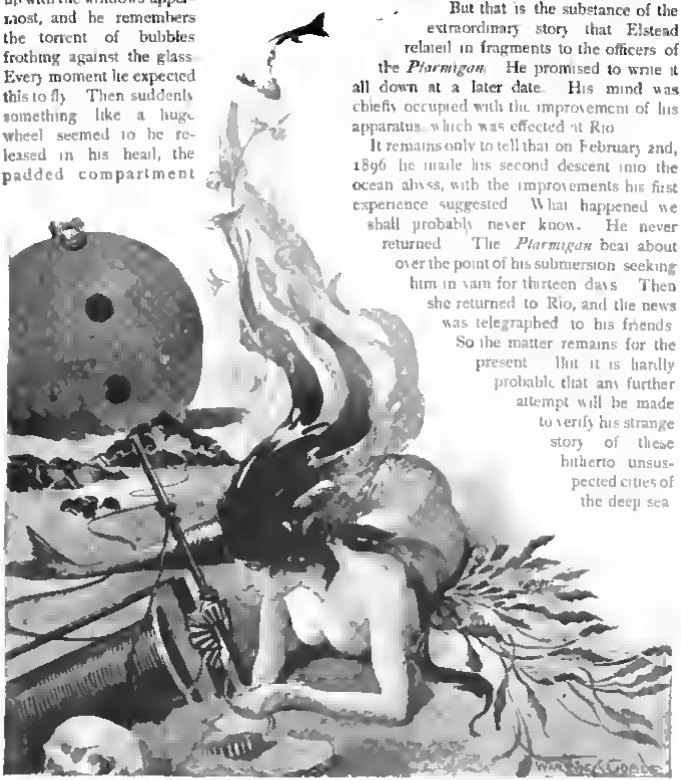
through our own atmosphere back to its native ether again. He must have torn out of their sight as a hydrogen bubble hastens upwards from our air. A strange ascension it must have seemed to them.

The sphere rushed up with even greater velocity than, when weighted with the lead sinkers, it had rushed down. It became exceedingly hot. It drove up with the windows uppermost, and he remembers the torrent of bubbles frothing against the glass. Every moment he expected this to fly. Then suddenly something like a huge wheel seemed to be released in his head, the padded compartment began spinning about him and he fainted. His next recollection was of his cabin, and of the doctor's voice.



But that is the substance of the extraordinary story that Elstead related in fragments to the officers of the *Ptarmigan*. He promised to write it all down at a later date. His mind was chiefly occupied with the improvement of his apparatus, which was effected at Rio.

It remains only to tell that on February 2nd, 1896, he made his second descent into the ocean abyss, with the improvements his first experience suggested. What happened we shall probably never know. He never returned. The *Ptarmigan* beat about over the point of his submersion seeking him in vain for thirteen days. Then she returned to Rio, and the news was telegraphed to his friends. So the matter remains for the present. But it is hardly probable that any further attempt will be made to verify his strange story of these hitherto unsuspected cities of the deep sea.



CINDERELLA.

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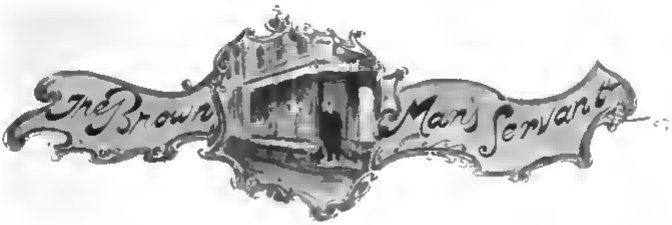

By W. W. Jacobs

CHAPTER I.

THE shop of Solomon Hyams stood in a small thoroughfare branching off the Commercial Road. In its windows unredeemed pledges of all kinds, from old-time watches to seamen's boots, appealed to all tastes and requirements. Bundles of cigars, candidly described as "wonderful," were marked at absurdly low figures, while silver watches endeavoured to excuse the clumsiness of their make by describing themselves as "strong workmen's." The side entrance, up a narrow alley, was surmounted by the usual three brass balls, and here Mr Hyams' clients were wont to call. They entered as optimists smiled confidently upon Mr Hyams, argued, protested shrilly, and left the establishment pessimists of a most pronounced and virulent type.

None of these things, however, disturbed the pawnbroker. The drunken client who endeavoured to bail out his Sunday clothes with a tram ticket was accommodated with a chair, while the assistant went to hunt up his friends and contract for a speedy removal, the old woman who, with a view of obtaining a higher advance than usual, poured a tale of grievous woe into the hardened ears of Mr Hyams, found herself left to the same invaluable assistant, and, realising her failure, would at once become cheerful and take what was offered. Mr Hyams' methods of business were quiet and unostentatious, and rumour had it that he might retire at any time and live in luxury.

It was a cold, cheerless afternoon in November as Mr Hyams, who had occasional hazy ideas of hygiene, stood at his door taking the air. It was an atmosphere laden with soot and redolent of many blended odours, but after the fusty smell of the shop it was almost health-giving. In the large public-house opposite, with its dirty windows and faded signboards, the gas was already being lit, which should change it from its daylight dreariness to a resort of light and life.

Mr Hyams, who was never in a hurry to light up his own premises, many of his clients preferring the romantic light which comes between day and night for their visits, was about to leave the chilly air for the warmth inside, when his attention was attracted by a seaman of sturdy aspect stopping and looking in at his window. Mr. Hyams rubbed his hands softly. There was an air of comfort and prosperity about this seaman, and the pawnbroker had many small articles in his window, utterly useless to the man, which he would have liked to have sold him.

The man came from the window, made as though to pass, and then paused irresolute before the pawnbroker.

"You want a watch?" said the latter genially. "Come inside."

Mr Hyams went behind his counter and waited.

"I don't want to buy nothing, and I don't want to pawn nothing," said the sailor. "What do you think o' that?"

Mr Hyams, who objected to riddles, especially those which seemed to be against business, eyed him unfavourably from beneath his shaggy eyebrows.

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"We might have a little quiet talk together," said the seaman, "you an' me; we might do a little bit o' business together, you an' me.

"Tea for me," said the seaman

In the parlor, shall we say, over a glass o' something hot?"

Mr. Hyams hesitated. He was not adverse to a little business of an illicit nature, but there rose up vividly before him the picture of another sailor who had made much the same sort of proposal, and, after four glasses of rum, had merely suggested to him that he should lend him twenty pounds on the security of an I O U. It was long since, but the memory of it still rankled.

"What sort of business is it?" he inquired.

"Business that's too big for you, p'raps," said the sailor with a lordly air. "I'll try a bigger place. What's that lantern-faced swab shoving his ugly mug into the daylight for?"

"Get off," said the pawnbroker to the assistant, who was quietly and unobtrusively making a third. "Mind the shop. This gentleman and I have business in the parlour. Come this way, sir."

He raised the flap of the counter, and led the way to a small, untidy room at the back of the shop. A copper kettle was boiling on the fire, and the table was already laid for tea. The pawnbroker, motioning his visitor to a dingy leather armchair, went to a cupboard and produced a bottle of rum, three parts full, and a couple of glasses.

"Tea for me," said the seaman, eyeing the bottle wistfully.

The pawnbroker pricked up his ears. "Nonsense," he said, with an attempt at heartiness, "a jolly fellow like you don't want tea. Have some o' this."

"Tea, confound 'er!" said the other. "When I say tea, I mean tea."

The pawnbroker, repressing his choler, replaced the bottle, and, seating himself at the table, reached over for the kettle, and made the tea. It was really a pleasing picture of domestic life, and would have looked well in a lantern slide at a temperance lecture, the long, gaunt Jew and the burly seaman hobnobbing over the blameless teapot. But Mr. Hyams grew restless. He was intent upon business, but the other, so far as his inroads on the teapot and the eatables gave any indication, seemed to be bent only upon pleasure. Once again the picture of the former sailor rose before Mr. Hyams' eyes, and he scowled fiercely as the seaman pushed his cup up for the fourth time.

"And now for a smoke," said his visitor,

as he settled back in his chair. "A good un, mind. Lord, this is comfort! It's the first bit o' comfort I've had since I come ashore five days ago."

The pawnbroker grunted, and producing a couple of black, greasy looking cigars, gave one to his guest. They both fell to smoking, the former ill at ease, the latter with his feet spread out on the small fender, making the very utmost of his bit of comfort.

"Are you a man as is fond of asking questions?" he said, at length.

"No," said the pawnbroker, shutting his lips illustratively.

"Suppose," said the sailor, leaning forward intently, "suppose a man came to you an' ses—there's that confounded assistant of yours peeping through the door!"

The pawnbroker got up almost as exasperated as the seaman, and, after rating his assistant through the half open door, closed it with a bang, and pulled down a small blind over the glass.

"Suppose a man came to you," resumed the sailor, after the pawnbroker had seated himself again, "and asked you for five hundred pounds for something. Have you got it?"

"Not here," said the pawnbroker suspiciously. "I don't keep any money on the premises."

"You could get it, though?" suggested the other.

"We'll see," said the pawnbroker; "five hundred pounds is a fortune—five hundred pounds. Why it takes years of work—five hundred pounds——"

"I don't want no blessed psalms," said the seaman abruptly; "but, look here, suppose I wanted five hundred pounds for something, and you wouldn't give it. How am I to know you wouldn't give information to the police if I didn't take what you offered me for it?"

The pawnbroker threw up his huge palms in virtuous horror.

"I'd mark you for it if you did," said the seaman menacingly through his teeth. "It 'ud be the worst day's work you ever did. Will you take it or leave it at my price, an' if you won't give it, leave me to go as I came?"

"I will," said the pawnbroker solemnly.

The seaman laid his cigar in the tray, where it expired in a little puddle of tea, and, undoing his coat, cautiously took from his waist a canvas belt. In a hesitating fashion he dangled the belt in his hands, looking from the Jew to the door, and from the door back to the Jew again. Then

"Hands off," he said grimly.

from a pocket in the belt he took something wrapped in a small piece of dirty flannel, and, unrolling it, deposited on the table a huge diamond, whose smouldering fires flashed

back in many colours the light from the gas.

The Jew, with an exclamation, reached forward to handle it, but the sailor thrust him back.

"Hands off," he said grimly. "None of your ringing the changes on me."

He tipped it over with his finger-nail on the table from side to side, the other, with his head bent down, closely inspecting it. Then, as a great indulgence, he laid it on the Jew's open palm for a few seconds.

"Five hundred pounds," he said, taking it in his own hands again.

The pawnbroker laughed. It was a laugh which he kept for business purposes, and would have formed a valuable addition to the goodwill of the shop.

"I'll give you fifty," he said, after he had regained his composure.

The seaman replaced the gem in its wrapper again.

"Well, I'll give you seventy, and risk whether I lose over it," continued the pawnbroker.

"Five hundred's my price," said the seaman calmly, as he placed the belt about his waist, and began to buckle it up.

"Seventy-five," said the pawnbroker persuasively.

"Look here," said the seaman, regarding him sternly, "you drop it. I'm not going to haggle with you. I'm not going to haggle with any man. I ain't no judge o' diamonds, but I've ad cause to know as this is something special. See here."

He rolled back the coat sleeve from his brawny arm, and revealed a long, newly healed scar.

"I risked my life for that stone," he said slowly. "I value my life at five hundred pounds. It's likely worth more than as many thousands, and you know it. However, good-night to you, mate. How much for the tea?"

He put his hand contemptuously in his trouser pocket, and pulled out some small change.

"There's the risk of getting rid of the stone," said the pawnbroker, pushing aside the proffered coin. "Where did it come from? Has it got a history?"

"Not in Europe it ain't," said the seaman. "So far as I know, you an' me an' one other are the only white men as know of it. That's all I'm going to tell you."

"Do you mind waiting while I go and fetch a friend of mine to see it?" inquired the pawnbroker. "You needn't be afraid," he added hastily. "He's a respectable man and as close as the grave."

"I'm not afraid," said the seaman quietly. "But no larks, mind. I'm not a nice man to play them on. I'm pretty strong, an' I've got something else besides."

He settled himself in the armchair again, and, accepting another cigar, watched his host as he took his hat from the sideboard.

"I'll be back as soon as I can," said the latter somewhat anxiously. "You won't go before I come?"

"Not me," said the seaman bluntly.

He smoked an contentedly.

"When I say a thing I stick to it I don't haggle, and haggle, and——' he paused a moment for a word, "and haggle,' he concluded

Left to himself, he smoked on contentedly, blandly undisturbed by the fact that the assistant looked in at the door occasionally, to see that things were all right It was quite a new departure for Mr Hyams to leave his parlour to a stranger, and the assistant felt a sense of responsibility so great that it was a positive relief to him when his master returned, accompanied by another man.

"This is my friend," said Mr Hyams

"This is my friend,' said Mr. Hyams, as they entered the parlour and closed the door "You might let him see the stone."

The seaman took off his belt again, and placing the diamond in his hand held it before the stranger who, making no attempt to take it, turned it over with his finger and examined it critically.

"Are you going to sea again just yet?" he inquired softly.

"Thursday night,' said the seaman "Five hundred is my price; p'raps he told you. I'm not going to haggle"

"Just so, just so," said the other quietly "It's worth five hundred."

"Spoke like a man,' said the seaman warmly.

"I like to deal with a man who knows his own mind," said the stranger, "it saves trouble. But if we buy it for that amount you must do one thing for us Keep quiet and don't touch a drop of liquor until you sail, and not a word to anybody."

"You needn't be afraid o' the liquor,' said the sailor grimly. "I shan't touch that for my own sake"

"He's a teetotaller,' explained the pawnbroker

"He's not,' said the seaman indignantly.

"Why won't you drink, then?' asked the other man

"Fancy,' said the seaman drily, and closed his mouth

Without another word the stranger turned to the pawnbroker, who, taking a pocket book from his coat, counted out the amount in notes. These, after the sailor had examined them in every possible manner, he rolled up and put in his pocket, then without a word he took out the diamond again and laid it silently on the table Mr Hyams, his fingers trembling with eagerness, took it up and examined it delightedly.

"You've got it a bargain' said the seaman. "Good-night, gentlemen. I hope, for your sakes, nobody'll know I've parted with it Keep your eyes open, and trust nobody When you see black, smell mischief, I'm glad to get rid of it"

He threw his head back, and, expanding his chest as though he already breathed more

freely, nodded to both men, and, walking through the shop, passed out into the street and disappeared.

Long after he had gone, the pawnbroker and his friend, Levi, sat with the door locked and the diamond before them, eagerly inspecting it.

"It's a great risk," said the pawnbroker. "A stone like that generally makes some noise."

"Anything good is risky," said the other somewhat contemptuously. "You don't expect to get a windfall like that without any drawback, do you?"

He took the stone in his hand again, and eyed it lovingly. "It's from the East somewhere," he said quietly. "It's badly cut, but it's a diamond of diamonds, a king of gems."

"I don't want any trouble with the police," said the pawnbroker as he took it from him.

"You are talking now as though you have just made a small advance on a stolen overcoat," said his friend impatiently. "A risk like that—and you have done it before now—is a foolish one to run, the game is not worth the candle. But this—why, it warms one's blood to look at it."

"Well, I'll leave it with you," said the pawnbroker. "If you do well with it I ought not to want to work any more."

The other placed it in an inside pocket, while the owner watched him anxiously.

"Don't let any accident happen to you to-night, Levi," he said nervously.

"Thanks for your concern," said Levi grimacing. "I shall probably be careful for my own sake."

He buttoned up his coat and, drinking a glass of hot whisky, went out whistling. He had just reached the door when the pawnbroker called him back.

"If you like to take a cab, Levi," he said in a low voice so that the assistant should not hear, "I'll pay for it."

"I'll take an omnibus," said Levi, smiling quietly. "You're getting extravagant, Hyams. Besides, fancy the humour of sitting next to a pickpocket with this on me!"

He waved a cheery farewell, and the pawnbroker, watching him from the door, scowled angrily as he saw his lighthearted friend hail an omnibus at the corner and board it. Then he went back to the shop, and his every-day business of making advances on flat-irons and other realisable assets of the neighbourhood.

At ten o'clock he closed for the night, the assistant hurriedly pulling down the shutters that his time for recreation might not be unduly curtailed. He slept off the premises, and the pawnbroker, after his departure, made a light supper, and sat revolving the affairs of the day over another of his black cigars until nearly midnight. Then, well contented with himself, he went up the bare, dirty stairs to his room and went to bed, and, despite the excitement of the evening, was soon in a loud slumber, from which he was aroused by a distant and sustained knocking.

CHAPTER II.

At first the noise mingled with his dreams, and helped to form them. He was down a mine, and grimy workers with strong picks were knocking diamonds from the walls, diamonds so large that he became despondent at the comparative smallness of his own. Then he awoke suddenly and sat up with a start, rubbing his eyes. The din was infernal to a man who liked to do a quiet business in an unobtrusive way. It was a knocking which he usually associated with the police, and it came from his side door. With a sense of evil strong upon him, the Jew sprang from his bed, and, slipping the catch, noiselessly opened the window and thrust his head out. In the light of a lamp which projected from the brick wall at the other end of the alley he saw a figure below.

"Hulloa!" said the Jew harshly.

His voice was drowned in the noise.

"What do you want?" he yelled. "Hulloa, there! What do you want, I say?"

The knocking ceased, and the figure, stepping back a little, looked up at the window.

"Come down and open the door," said a voice which the pawnbroker recognised as the sailor's.

"Go away," he said, in a low stern voice. "Do you want to rouse the neighbourhood?"

"Come down and let me in," said the other. "It's for your own good. You're a dead man if you don't."

Impressed by his manner the Jew, after

bidding him shortly not to make any more noise, lit his candle, and, dressing hurriedly, took the light in his hand and went grumbling downstairs into the shop.

"Now, what do you want?" he said through the door.

"Let me in and I'll tell you," said the other, "or I'll bawl it through the keyhole, if you like."

The Jew, placing the candle on the counter, drew back the heavy bolts and cautiously opened the door. The seaman stepped in, and, as the other closed the door, vaulted on to the counter and sat there with his legs dangling.

"That's right," he said, nodding approvingly in the direction of the Jew's right hand. "I hope you know how to use it."

"What do you want?" demanded the other irritably, putting his hand behind him. "What time o' night do you call this for turning respectable men out of their beds?"

"I didn't come for the pleasure o' seeing your pretty face again, you can bet," said the seaman carelessly. "It's good nature what's brought me here. What have you done with that diamond?"

"That's my business," said the other. "What do you want?"

"I told you I sailed in five days," said the seaman. "Well, I got another ship this evening instead, and I sail at 6 a.m. Things are getting just a bit too thick for me, an' I thought out o' pure good nature I'd step round and put you on your guard."

He took the light in his hand and went grumbling downstairs.

"Why didn't you do so at first," said the Jew, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Well, I didn't want to spoil a bargain," said the seaman carelessly. "Maybe, you wouldn't have bought the stone if I had told you. Mind that thing don't go off, I don't want to rob you. Point it the other way."

"There was four of us in that deal," he continued, after the other had complied with his request. "Me an' Jack Ball and Nosey Wheeler and a Burmese chap; the last I see o' Jack Ball he was quiet and peaceful, with a knife sticking in his chest. If I hadn't been a very careful man I'd have had one sticking in mine. If you ain't a very careful man, and do what I tell you, you'll have one sticking in yours."

"Speak a little more plainly," said the Jew. "Come into the parlour. I don't want the police to see a light in the shop."

"We stole it," said the seaman, as he followed the other into the little back parlour, "the four of us, from——"

"I don't want to know anything about that," interrupted the other hastily.

The sailor grinned approvingly, and continued: "Then me an' Jack being stronger than them, we took it from them two, but they got level with poor Jack. I shipped before the mast on a barque, and they came over by steamer and waited for me."

"Well, you're not afraid of them?" said the Jew interrogatively. "Besides, a word to the police——"

"Telling 'em all about the diamond," said

the seaman. "Oh, yes. Well, you can do that now if you feel so inclined. They know all about *that*, bless you, and, if they were bad, they'd blab about the diamond."

"Have they been dogging you?" inquired the pawnbroker.

"Dogging me!" said the seaman. "Dogging's no word for it. Wherever I've been they've been my shadders. They want to hurt me, but they're careful about being hurt themselves. That's where I have the pull of them. They want the stone back first, and revenge afterwards, so I thought I'd put you on your guard, for they pretty well guess who's got the thing now. You'll know Wheeler by his nose, which is broken."

"I'm not afraid of them," said the Jew, "but thank you for telling me. Did they follow you here?"

"They're outside, I've no doubt," said the other; "but they come along like human cats—leastways, the Burmah chap does. You want eyes in the back of your head for them almost. The Burmese is an old man and soft as velvet, and Jack Ball just afore he died was going to tell me something about him. I don't know what it was; but, pore Jack, he was a superstitious sort o' chap, and I know it was something horrible. He was as brave as a lion, was Jack, but he was afraid o' that little shrivelled-up Burmese. They'll follow me to the ship to-night. If they'll only come close enough, and there's nobody nigh, I'll do Jack a good turn."

"Stay here till the morning," said the Jew.

The seaman shook his head. "I don't want to miss my ship," said he; "but remember what I've told you, and mind, they're villains, both of them, and if you are not very careful they'll have you, sooner or later. Good night!"

He buttoned up his coat, and leading the way to the door followed by the Jew with the candle, opened it noiselessly, and peered carefully out right and left. The alley was empty.

"Take this," said the Jew, proffering his pistol.

"I've got one," said the seaman. "Good night."

He strode boldly up the alley, his footsteps sounding loudly in the silence of the night. The Jew watched him to the corner, and then, closing the door, secured it with extra care, and went back to his bedroom, where he lay meditating upon the warning which had just been given to him until he fell asleep.

Before going downstairs next morning he placed the revolver in his pocket, not necessarily for use, but as a demonstration of the lengths to which he was prepared to go. His manner with two or three inoffensive gentlemen of colour was also somewhat strained. Especially was this the case with a worthy Lascar, who, knowing no English, gesticulated cheerfully in front of him with a long dagger which he wanted to pawn.

The morning passed without anything happening, and it was nearly dinner time before anything occurred to justify the sailor's warning. Then, happening to glance at the window, he saw between the articles which were hanging there a villainous face, the principal feature of which being strangely bent at once recalled the warning of the sailor. As he looked the face disappeared, and a moment later its owner, after furtively looking in at the side door, entered quietly.

"Morning, boss," said he.

The pawnbroker nodded and waited.

"I want to have a little talk with you, boss," said the man, after waiting for him to speak.

"All right, go on," said the other.

"What about 'im?" said the man, indicating the assistant with a nod.

"Well, what about him?" inquired the Jew.

"What I've got to say is private," said the man.

The Jew raised his eyebrows.

"You can go in and get your dinner, Bob," he said. "Now, what do you want?" he continued. "Hurry up, because I'm busy."

"I come from a pal o' mine," said the man, speaking in a low voice, "him what was 'ere last night. He couldn't come himself, so he sent me. He wants it back."

"Wants what back?" asked the Jew.

"The diamond," said the other.

"Diamond? What on earth are you talking about?" demanded the pawnbroker.

"You needn't try to come it on me," said the other fiercely. "We want that diamond back, and, mind you, we'll have it."

"You clear out," said the Jew. "I don't allow people to come threatening me. Out you go."

"We'll do more than threaten you," said the man, the veins in his forehead swelling with rage. "You've got that diamond. You got it for five undred pound. We'll give you that back for it, and you may think yourself lucky to get it."

"You've been drinking," said the Jew, "or somebody's been fooling you."

"Look here," said the man with a snarl, "drop it. I'm dealing fair an' square by you. I don't want to hurt a hair of your head. I'm a peaceable man, but I want my own, and, what's more, I can get it. I got the shell, and I can get the kernel. Do you know what I mean by that?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," said the Jew. He moved off a little way, and, taking some tarnished spoons from a box, began to rub them with a piece of leather.

"I daresay you can take a hint as well as anybody else," said the other. "Have you seen that before?"

He threw something on the counter, and the Jew started, despite himself, as he glanced up. *It was the sailor's belt.*

"That's a hint," said the man with a leer, "and a very fair one."

The Jew looked at him steadily, and saw that he was white and nervous; his whole aspect that of a man who was running a great risk for a great stake.

"I suppose," he said at length, speaking very slowly, "that you want me to understand that you have murdered the owner of this."

"Understand what you like," said the other with sullen ferocity. "Will you let us have that back again?"

"No," said the Jew explosively. "I have no fear of a dog like you; if it was worth the trouble I'd send for the police and hand you over to them."

"Call them," said the other, "do. I'll

It was the sailor's belt.

wan. But, mark my words, if you don't give us the stone back you're a dead man. I've got a pal what half that diamond belongs to. He's from the east, and a bad man to cross. He has only got to wish it, and you're a dead man without his raising a finger at you. I've come here to do you a good turn; if he comes here it's all up with you."

"Well, you go back to him," jeered the Jew, "a clever man like that can get the diamond without going near it seemingly. You're wasting your time here, and it's a pity; you must have got a lot of friends."

"Well, I've warned you," said the other, "you'll have one more warning. If you won't be wise you must keep the diamond, but it won't be much good to you. It's a good stone, but, speaking for myself, I'd sooner be alive without it, than dead with it."

He gave the Jew a menacing glance and departed, and the assistant having by this

time finished his dinner, the pawnbroker went to his own with an appetite by no means improved by his late interview

CHAPTER III

The cat, with its fore-paws tucked beneath it, was dozing on the counter. Business had been slack that morning, and it had only been pushed off three times. It had staked out a claim on that counter some five years before, and if anything was required to convince it of the value of the possession it was the fact that it was being constantly pushed off. To a firm-minded cat this alone gave the counter a value difficult to over-estimate, and sometimes an obsequious customer fell into raptures over its beauty. This was soothing, and the animal allowed customers of this type to scratch it gently behind the ear.

The cat was for the time the only occupant of the shop. The assistant was out, and the pawnbroker sat in the small room beyond, with the door half open, reading a newspaper. He had read the financial columns, glanced at the foreign intelligence, and was just about to turn to the leader when his eye was caught by the headline, "Murder in Whitechapel."

He folded the paper back, and, with a chilly feeling creeping over him, perused the account. In the usual thrilling style it recorded the finding of the body of a man, evidently a sailor, behind a hoarding placed in front of some shops in course of erection. There was no clue to the victim, who had evidently been stabbed from behind in the street, and then dragged or carried to the place in which the body had been discovered.

The pockets had been emptied, and the police, who regarded the crime as an ordinary one of murder and robbery, entertained the usual hopes of shortly arresting the assassins.

The pawnbroker put the paper down, and drummed on the table with his fingers. The description of the body left no room for doubt that the victim of the tragedy and the man who had sold him the diamond were identical. He began to realise the responsibilities of the bargain, and the daring of his visitor of the day before, in venturing before him almost red-handed, gave him an unpleasant idea of the lengths to which he was prepared to go. In a pleasanter direction it gave him another idea; it was strong confirmation of Levi's valuation of the stone.

"I shall see my friend again," said the Jew to himself, as he looked up from the paper. "Let him make an attempt on me and we'll see."

He threw the paper down, and settling back in his chair, fell into a pleasing reverie. He saw his release from sordid toil close at hand. He would travel and enjoy his life. Pity the diamond hadn't come twenty years before. As for the sailor, well, poor fellow, why didn't he stay when he was asked?

The cat, still dozing, became aware of a strong, strange odour. In a lazy fashion it opened one eye, and discovered that an old, shrivelled up little man, with a brown face, was standing by the counter. It watched him lazily, but warily, out of a half closed eye, and then, finding that he appeared to be quite harmless, closed it again.

The intruder was not an impatient type of customer. He stood for some time gazing round him; then a thought struck him, and he approached the cat and stroked it with a masterly hand. Never, in the course of its life, had the animal met such a born stroker. Every touch was a caress and a gentle thrum, thrum rose from its interior in response.

Something went wrong with the stroker. He hurt. The cat started up suddenly and jumped behind the counter. The dark gentleman smiled an evil smile and, after waiting a little longer, tapped on the counter.

The pawnbroker came from the little room beyond, with the newspaper in his hand, and his brow darkened as he saw the customer. He was of a harsh and dominant nature, and he foresaw more distasteful threats.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded abruptly.

"Morning, sir," said the brown man in perfect English, "fine day."

"The day's well enough," said the Jew.

"I wanted a little talk with you," said the other suavely, "a little, quiet, reasonable talk."

"You'd better make it short," said the Jew. "My time is valuable."

The brown man smiled, and raised his hand with a deprecatory gesture. "Many

things are valuable," said he, "but time is the most valuable of all. And time to us means life."

The Jew saw the covert threat, and grew more irritable still.

"Get to your business," he said sharply.

The brown man leant on the counter, and regarded him with a pair of fierce, brown eyes which age had not dimmed.

"You are a reasonable man," he said slowly, "a good merchant. I can see it. But sometimes a good merchant makes a bad bargain. In that case what does the good merchant do?"

"Get out of here," said the Jew angrily.

"He makes the best of it," continued the other calmly, "and he is a lucky man if he is not too late to repair the mischief. *You are not too late.*"

The Jew laughed boisterously.

"There was a sailor once made a bad bargain," said the brown man, still in the same even tones, "and he died—of grief."

He grinned at this pleasantry until his face looked like a cracked mask.

"I read in this paper of a sailor being killed," said the Jew, holding it up. "Have you ever heard of the police, of prison, and of the hangman?"

"All of them," said the other softly.

"I might be able to put the hangman on the track of the sailor's murderer," continued the Jew grimly.

The brown man smiled and shook his head. "You are too good a merchant," he said; "besides, it would be very difficult."

"It would be a pleasure to me," said the Jew.

"Let us talk business like men, not nonsense like children," said the brown man suddenly. "You talk of hangmen. I talk of death. Well, listen. Two nights ago you bought a diamond from a sailor for five hundred pounds. Unless you give me that diamond back for the same money I will kill you."

"What?" snarled the Jew, drawing his gaunt figure to its full height. "You, you miserable mummy?"

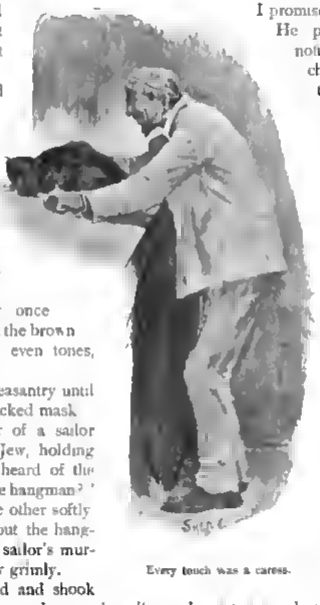
"I will kill you," repeated the brown man calmly. "I will send death to you—death in a horrible shape. I will send a devil, a little, artful, teasing devil, to worry you and kill you. In the darkness he will come and spring out on you. You had better give back the diamond, and live. If you give it back I promise you your life."

He paused, and the Jew noticed that his face had changed, and in place of the sardonic good humour which had before possessed it, was now distorted by a devilish malice. His eyes gleamed coldly, and he snapped them quickly as he spoke.

"Well, what do you say?" he demanded.

"This," said the Jew.

He leant over the counter, and, taking the brown man's skinny throat in his great hand, flung him reeling back to the partition, which shook with his weight. Then he burst into a laugh as the being who had just been threatening him with a terrible and mysterious death changed into a little weak old man, coughing and spitting as he clutched at his throat and fought for breath.



Every touch was a caress.

"What about your servant, the devil?" asked the Jew maliciously.

"He serves when I am absent," said the brown man faintly. "Even now I give you one more chance. I will let you see the young fellow in your shop die first. But no, he has not offended. I will kill ——"

He paused, and his eye fell on the cat, which at that moment sprang up and took its old place on the counter. "I will kill your cat," said the brown man. "I will send the devil to worry it. Watch the cat, and as its death is so shall yours be—unless——"

"Unless?" said the Jew, regarding him mockingly.

"Unless to-night before ten o'clock you mark on your door-post two crosses in chalk," said the other. "Do that and live. Watch your cat."

He pointed his lean, brown finger at the animal, and, still feeling at his throat, stepped softly to the door and passed out.

With the entrance of other customers, the pawnbroker forgot the annoyance to which he had been subjected, and attended to their wants in a spirit made liberal by the near prospect of fortune. It was certain that the stone must be of great value. With that and the money he had made by his business, he would give up work and settle down to a life of pleasant ease. So liberal was he that an elderly Irishwoman forgot their slight differences in creeds and blessed him fervently with all the saints in the calendar.

Taking the brown man's skinny throat in his great hand.

His assistant being back in his place in the shop, the pawnbroker returned to the little sitting-room, and once more carefully looked through the account of the sailor's murder. Then he sat still trying to work out a problem to hand the murderers over to the police without his connection with the stolen diamond being made public, and, after considerable deliberation, convinced himself that the feat was impossible.

He was interrupted by a slight scuffling noise in the shop, and the cat came bolting into the room, and, after running round the table, went out at the door and fled upstairs. The assistant came into the room.

"What are you worrying the thing for?" demanded his master.

"I'm not worrying it," said the assistant in an aggrieved voice. "It's been moving about up and down the shop, and then it suddenly started like that. It's got a fit, I suppose."

He went back to the shop, and the Jew sat in his chair half ashamed of his nervous credulity, listening to the animal, which was rushing about in the rooms upstairs.

"Go and see what's the matter with the thing, Bob," he cried.

The assistant obeyed, returning hastily in a minute or two, and closing the door behind him.

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded his master.

"The brute's gone mad," said the assistant, whose face was white. "It's flying about upstairs like a wild thing. Mind it don't get in, it's as bad as a mad dog."

"Oh, rubbish," said the Jew. "Cats are often like that."

"Well, I've never seen one like it before," said the other, "and, what's more, I'm not going to see that again."

The animal came downstairs, scuffling along the passage, hit the door with its head, and then dashed upstairs again.

"It must have been poisoned, or else it's mad," said the assistant. "What's it been eating, I wonder?"

The pawnbroker made no reply. The suggestion of poisoning was a welcome one. It was preferable to the sinister hintings of the brown man. But even if it had been poisoned it was a very singular coincidence, unless indeed the Burmese had himself poisoned it. He tried to think whether it

could have been possible for his visitor to have administered poison undetected.

"It's quiet now," said the assistant, and he opened the door a little way.

"It's all right," said the pawnbroker, half ashamed of his fears, "get back to the shop."

The assistant complied, and the Jew, after sitting down a little while to persuade himself that he really had no particular interest in the matter, rose and went slowly upstairs. The staircase was badly lighted, and half way up he stumbled on something soft. He gave a hasty exclamation and, stooping down, saw that he had trodden on the dead cat.

CHAPTER IV

At ten o'clock that night the pawnbroker sat with his friend Levi discussing a bottle of champagne, which the open-eyed assistant had procured from the public-house opposite.

"You're a lucky man, Hyams," said his friend, as he raised his glass to his lips. "Thirty thousand pounds! It's a fortune, a small fortune," he added correctively.

"I shall give this place up," said the pawnbroker, "and go away for a time. I'm not safe here."

"Safe?" queried Levi, raising his eyebrows.

The pawnbroker related his adventures with his visitors.

"I can't understand that cat business," said Levi when he had finished. "It's quite farcical, he must have poisoned it."

"He wasn't near it," said the pawnbroker, "it was at the other end of the counter."

"Oh, hang it," said Levi, the more irritably because he could not think of any solution to the mystery, "you don't believe in occult powers and all that sort of thing. This is the neighbourhood of the Commercial-road, time, nineteenth century. The thing's got on your nerves. Keep your eyes open, and stay indoors, they can't hurt you here. Why not tell the police?"

"I don't want any questions," said the pawnbroker.

"I mean, just tell them that one or two suspicious characters have been hanging round lately," said the other. "If this precious couple see that they are watched they'll probably bolt. There's nothing like a uniform to scare that sort."

"I won't have anything to do with the police," said the pawnbroker firmly.

"Well, let Bob sleep on the premises," suggested his friend.

"I think I will to-morrow," said the other. "I'll have a bed fixed up for him."

"Why not to-night?" asked Levi.

"He's gone," said the pawnbroker briefly. "Didn't you hear him shut up?"

"He was in the shop five minutes ago," said Levi.

"He left at ten," said the pawnbroker.

"I'll swear I heard somebody only a minute or two ago," said Levi, staring.

"Nerves, as you remarked a little while ago," said his friend, with a grin.

"Well, I thought I heard him," said Levi. "You might just secure the door, anyway."

The pawnbroker went to the door and made it fast, giving a careless glance round the dimly lighted shop as he did so.

"Perhaps you could stay to-night, yourself," he said, as he returned to the sitting-room.

"I can't possibly, to-night," said the other. "By the way, you might lend me a pistol of some kind. With all these cut-throats hanging round, visiting you is a somewhat perilous pleasure. They might take it into their heads to kill me to see whether I have got the stone."

"Take your pick," said the pawnbroker, going to the shop and returning with two or three secondhand revolvers and some cartridges.

"I never fired one in my life," said Levi dubiously, "but I believe the chief thing is to make a bang. Which'll make the loudest?"

On his friend's recommendation he selected a revolver of the service pattern, and, after one or two suggestions from the pawnbroker, expressed himself as qualified to shoot anything between a chimney-pot and a paving stone.

"Make your room door fast to-night, and to-morrow let Bob have a bed there," he said, earnestly, as he rose to go. "By the way, why not make those chalk marks on the door just for the night? You can laugh at them to-morrow. Sort of suggestion of the Passover about it, isn't there?"

"I'm not going to mark my door for all

the assassins that ever breathed,' said the Jew fiercely, as he rose to see the other out.

"Well, I think you're safe enough in the house," said Levi. "Beastly dreary the shop looks. To a man of imagination like myself it's quite easy to fancy that there is one of your brown friend's pet devils crouching under the counter ready to spring."

The pawnbroker grunted and opened the door.

"Poof, fog," said Levi, as a cloud streamed in. "Bad night for pistol practice. I shan't be able to hit anything."

The two men stood in the doorway for a minute, trying to peer through the fog. A heavy, measured tread sounded in the alley, a huge figure loomed up, and, to the relief of Levi, a constable halted before them.

"Thick night, sir," said he to the pawnbroker.

"Very," was the reply. "Just keep your eye on my place to-night, constable. There have been one or two suspicious looking characters hanging about here lately."

"I will, sir," said the constable, and moved off in company with Levi.

The pawnbroker closed the door hastily behind them, and bolted it securely. His friend's jest about the devil under the counter occurred to him as he eyed it, and for the first time in his life the lonely silence of the shop became oppressive. He half thought of opening the door again and calling them back, but by this time they were out of earshot, and he had a very strong idea that there might be somebody lurking in the fog outside.

"Bah!" said he aloud, "thirty thousand pounds."

He turned the gas jet on full—a man that had just made that sum could afford to burn a little gas—and, first satisfying himself by looking under the counter and round the shop, re-entered the sitting-room.

Despite his efforts, he could not get rid of the sense of loneliness and danger which possessed him. The clock had stopped, and the only sound audible was the snapping of the extinguished coals in the grate. He crossed over to the mantelpiece, and, taking out his watch, wound the clock up. Then he heard something else.

With great care he laid the key softly on the mantelpiece, and listened intently. The clock was now aggressively audible, so that he opened the case again, and, putting his finger against the pendulum, stopped it. Then he drew his revolver and cocked it, and, with his set face turned towards the door, and his lips parted, waited.

At first—nothing. Then all the noises which a lonely man hears in a house at night. The stairs creaked, something moved in the walls. He crossed noiselessly to the door, and opened it. At the head of the staircase he fancied the darkness moved.

"Who's there?" he cried in a strong voice.

Then he stepped back into the room and lit his lamp. "I'll get to bed," he said grimly, "I've got the horrors."

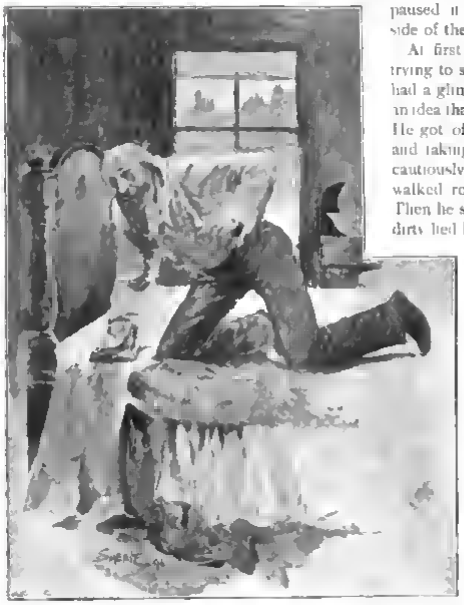
He left the gas burning, and with the lamp in his left hand and the pistol in his right slowly ascended the stairs. The first landing was clear. He opened the doors of each room, and, holding the lamp aloft, peered in. Then he mounted higher, and looked in the rooms, crammed from floor to ceiling with pledges, ticketed and placed on shelves. In one room he thought he saw something crouching in a corner. He entered boldly, and as he passed along one side of a row of shelves could have sworn that he heard a stealthy footfall on the other. He rushed back to the door, and hung listening over the shaky balusters. Nothing stirred, and, satisfied that he must have been mistaken, he gave up the search, and went to his bedroom. He set the lamp down on the drawers, and turned to close the door, when he distinctly heard a noise in the shop below. He snatched up the lamp again, and ran hastily down stairs, pausing half-way on the lowest flight as he saw a dark figure spreadeagled against the side door, standing on tiptoe to draw back the bolt.

At the noise of his approach, it turned its head hastily, and revealed the face of the brown man; the bolt shot back, and at the same moment the Jew raised his pistol and fired twice.

From beneath the little cloud of smoke, as it rose, he saw that the door stood open, and that the figure had vanished. He ran hastily

down to the door, and, with the pistol raised, stood listening, trying to peer through the fog.

An unearthly stillness followed the deafening noise of the shots. The fog poured in at the doorway as he stood there hoping that the noise had reached the ears of some chance passer by. He stood so for a few minutes, and then, closing the door again, resolutely turned back and went upstairs.



He leant over cautiously.

His first proceeding upon entering his room was to carefully look beneath and behind the heavy, dusty pieces of furniture, and, satisfied that no foe lurked there, he closed the door and locked it. Then he opened the window gently, and listened. The court below was perfectly still. He closed the window, and, taking off his coat, barricaded the door with all the heaviest furniture in the room. With a feeling of perfect security, he complacently regarded his handiwork, and then, sitting on the edge of the bed, began to undress. He turned the lamp down a little, and reloading the empty chambers of his revolver, placed it by the side of the lamp on the drawers. Then, as he turned back the clothes, he fancied that something moved beneath them. As he paused it dropped lightly from the other side of the bed to the floor.

At first he sat, with knitted brows, trying to see what it was. He had only had a glimpse of it, but he certainly had an idea that it was alive. A rat, perhaps. He got off the bed again with an oath, and taking the lamp in his hand, peered cautiously about the floor. Twice he walked round the room in this fashion. Then he stooped down, and, raising the dirty lied hangings, peered beneath.

He almost touched the wicked little head of the brown man's devil, and, with a stifled cry, sprang hastily backward. The lamp shattered against the corner of the drawers, and, falling in a shower of broken glass and oil about his stockinged feet, left him in darkness. He threw the fragment of glass stand which remained in his hand from him, and, quick as thought, gained the bed again, and crouched there, breathing heavily.

He tried to think where he had put the matches, and remembered there were some on the window sill. The room was so dark that he could not see the foot of the bed, and in his futility he had barricaded himself in the room with the loathsome reptile which was to work the brown man's vengeance.

For some time he lay listening intently. Once or twice he fancied that he heard the rustle of the snake over the dingy carpet, and he wondered whether it would attempt to climb on to the bed. He stood up, and

tried to get his revolver from the drawers. It was out of reach, and as the bed creaked beneath his weight, a faint hiss sounded from the floor, and he sat still again, hardly daring to breathe.

The cold rawness of the room chilled him. He cautiously drew the bed-clothes towards him, and rolled himself up in them, leaving only his head and arms exposed. In this position he began to feel more secure, until the thought struck him that the snake might be inside them. He fought against this idea, and tried to force his nerves into steadiness. Then his fears suggested that two might have been placed in the bed. At this his fears got the upper hand, and it seemed to him that something stirred in the clothes. He drew his body from them slowly and stealthily, and taking them in his arms, flung them violently to the other end of the room. On his hands and knees he now travelled over the bare bed, feeling. There was nothing there.

In this state of suspense and dread time seemed to stop. Several times he thought that the thing had got on the bed, and to stay there in suspense in the darkness was impossible. He felt it over again and again. At last, unable to endure it any longer, he resolved to obtain the matches, and stepped cautiously off the bed; but no sooner had his feet touched the floor than his courage forsook him, and he sprang hurriedly back to his refuge again.

After that, in a spirit of dogged fatalism, he sat still and waited. To his disordered mind it seemed that footsteps were moving about the house, but they had no terrors for him. To grapple with a man for life and death would be play; to kill him, joy unspeakable. He sat still, listening. He heard rats in the walls and a babel of jeering voices on the staircase. The whole blackness of the room with the devilish, writhing thing on the floor became invested with supernatural significance. Then, dimly at first and hardly comprehending the joy of it, he saw the window. A little later he saw the outlines of the things in the room. The night had passed and he was alive!

He raised his half-frozen body to its full height, and, expanding his chest planted his feet firmly on the bed, stretching his long body to the utmost. He clenched his fist, and felt strong. The bed was unoccupied except by himself. He bent down and scrutinised the floor for his enemy, and set his teeth as he thought how he would tear it and mangle it. It was light enough, but first he would put on his boots. He leant over cautiously, and, lifting one on to the bed, put it on. Then he bent down and took up the other, and, swift as lightning, something issued from it and, coiling round his wrist, ran up the sleeve of his shirt.

With starting eyeballs the Jew held his breath, and, stiffened into stone, waited helplessly. The tightness round his arm relaxed as the snake drew the whole of its body under the sleeve and wound round his arm. He felt its head moving. It came wriggling across his chest, and, with a mad cry, the wretched man clutched at the front of his shirt with both hands and strove to tear it off. He felt the snake in his hands, and for a moment hoped. Then the creature got its head free, and struck him smartly in the throat.

The Jew's hold relaxed, and the snake fell at his feet. He bent down and seized it, careless now that it bit his hand, and, with bloodshot eyes, dashed it repeatedly on the rail of the bed. Then he flung it to the floor, and, raising his heel, smashed its head to pulp.

His fury passed, he strove to think, but his brain was in a whirl. He had heard of sucking the wound, but one puncture was in his throat, and he laughed discordantly. He had heard that death had been prevented by drinking heavily of spirits. He would do that first, and then obtain medical assistance.

He ran to the door, and began to drag the furniture away. In his haste the revolver fell from the drawers to the floor. He looked at it steadily for a moment, and then, taking it up, handled it wistfully. He began to think more clearly, although a numbing sensation was already stealing over him.

"Thirty thousand pounds!" he said slowly, and tapped his cheek lightly with the cold barrel.

Then he slipped it in his mouth, and, pulling the trigger, crashed heavily to the floor.

THE MOON CHILD

By
W Bert
Foster

Yes, Senor, it is now seven years since the little one came to me. She is the light of my life—ah, Señor, to me she is indeed "the moon child."

It is a long story; you will find it—ah—what you Inglese call tedious, perhaps. No? Then, if you wish.

You see, she is not of the Spanish, Señor. She is white—so white—and the curls, they fall over my brown hand here like rays of sunlight. She would be Inglese, like the Señor, eh? No? Americano? Ah, then, Señor, I speak with more freedom. Why, you will see.

It was seven years ago. I had not this comfortable hacienda then. No; I was a poor trader, journeying back and forth from the coast towns to the interior villages. No, it was not always thus. I am of good family. My father intended me for the priesthood. To that end I was educated; even in the Inglese I am not at fault, eh? But misfortunes—my family were swept away, and with them the property. So I leave sunny Spain and come here to Georgetown. That is now twenty years.

My pack-train starts from Essequibo, but it is here in Georgetown I obtain my outfit for each trip. You know what a trader's life is like? No? It is to take by mule-back far into the country such commodities as will be saleable to the miners and planters, and to the Indians as well. Yes, the Indians—in most part, that is—are friendly. There *are* tribes—yes, but that is ahead of my story, as you would say, Señor.

It is here in Georgetown I meet Señor Hartley. In a business way? Yes. Señor Hartley had come out to represent a great shipping firm, and of them I bought much. He was a young man, and he brought with him the young Señora, his wife. They were married when he received his commission to Georgetown.

And she—ah, Señor, she was an angel! Señor Hartley was not a bad man, but he was weak. He was easily led. Georgetown was a hard place for any young man in those days, and Señor Hartley fell an easy prey to the wicked ones.

The Señora liked not his gay companions. They lived here, yes, Señor, this was his hacienda. It is away from the town, you see. She was so innocent, so pure herself,

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that she was the last to hear of her husband's excesses. Ah, Señor, she trusted him. She was indeed an angel.

She was good to the poor people, and they loved her. It was sad that she had no friends here who could shield her from that which was to follow. But Señor Hartley's reputation overshadowed his wife as well. There were few among the better people of Georgetown who were willing to show the Señora kindnesses.

Señor Hartley began to neglect his business, too. That was bad, for his firm in London soon heard of it. There are plenty to give a man a push when he is on the down-hill road, Señor. He was in the toils of one of the most notorious adventuresses on the coast, and he frequented the gaming table nightly.

It is fresh in my memory as though it had happened yesterday. I was anxious to start into the interior with my pack-train the next month, and there was some unfinished business between Señor Hartley and myself. I had searched for him at his office, but he had not been there all day. He often neglected to appear there for more than twenty-four hours, and the canoes were ready to take my goods and I, myself, Señor, to Essequibo.

As a last resort I sought him here at his hacienda.

How he could have done such a thing Señor, is beyond me. He must have been in drink. For two days his wife had been sojourning in the country, and Señor Hartley had brought the Alcarez out here in her absence. Ah, who can understand the actions of a man enamoured of such a woman? She was beautiful—a goddess, Señor, in form; but a devil incarnate.

Evidently the Señora's return was unexpected. I reached the hacienda from Georgetown just as her carriage, drawn by a span of bay mules, drew up at the verandah. She greeted me graciously, and at my inquiry for her husband, explained that she had been away, but invited me in that she might inquire of the servants.

The hacienda seemed deserted as we entered the broad hall. Not one servant was there to greet her. She pushed aside the hangings at the door of the room within, and there were the Alcarez and Señor Hartley! I was directly behind her, and the look which flashed into her face I shall never forget.

The Señor was foolishly drunken, and the Alcarez was as insolent as only such a creature can be. Ah, *Dios!* how her foul tongue lashed that poor wounded bird. I could have killed her—but, Señor, she was not a man.

The Señora uttered not a word under the tirade of abuse. She seemed to shrink more and more within herself, a pitiful, trembling, heart-broken creature. Then she fled from the scene of her shame.

She passed me like a shadow, looking neither right nor left, and I saw her disappear behind the hedge of rose trees before the hacienda. I returned to Georgetown, and left that night for the interior.

* * * * *

It was three months, Señor, before I returned. Then I learnt the sequel. The Señora Hartley had not been seen from the hour of her frenzied departure from the hacienda. It was supposed that she had wandered into the forest and perished.

A new man had been sent out to take Hartley's place. *He* had died of the drink a month after his wife disappeared. The Alcarez had another lover—*quien sabe?*

* * * * *

Ah, Señor, you think me tedious? No? We shall come to the little one yet.

I planned a long journey after the wet season had passed; far into the interior towards the head waters of the Essequibo. I was well known among many of the native tribes, and feared not. I was younger then, and adventure possessed still some charm for me, Señor.

But before I had been a fortnight on my journey I heard reports which caused even me to wish that my plans for the trip had been less extensive. I fell in with members of a hill tribe who reported the mountains higher up the river to be overrun with war parties of savage Indians from beyond the Makarapan Mountains.

Demerara, indeed the whole of this British Guiana, is free from hostiles, or nearly so. There are some tribes who look upon the whites with suspicion; but among them all

there is no tribe—feared by the harmless natives and we of the coast town as well—like these beyond the Makarapans. Señor, *they* are the dreaded White Indians of the Essequibo.

You are a stranger in Demerara, Señor, and have not heard the tales related of these strange savages, eh? They will tell you—your Inglese friends—that the White Indians are a fairy tale—an imagination, you would say. Ah, Señor, they know not. I, Manuel Lopez, with mine own eyes have seen these people, and they are no fairy tale.

Who or what they are, I know not. Some—learned men, Señor—tell us they are the descendants of the great Peruvian nation, which, under their Incas, occupied the Pacific slope ere the great Pizarro drove them Eastward. Some such tradition about them have the other natives. They are a higher type of savage than the Essequibo Indian, and far more warlike.

The farther I advanced upon this journey the more exact and circumstantial became the accounts of the depredations of these bands of White Indians. I lost one set of mule drivers outright before I had gone half my journey. The almost daily reports brought to us caused them to desert me. They were poor, witless creatures at best.

I made other recruits of a more sturdy tribe, and pressed on. My wealth, Señor, was invested in the packs on my mules, and I could not afford to lose a good trading trip because of reported hostiles.

There were several mining camps farther up in the ranges, and miners were my best patrons. I left the Indian village at the foot of the first range with my full number of mules and drivers. The mule is a sure-footed beast, Señor, and only by it can the trader's outfit be carried over the blind trails of the Makarapan Sierras.

Ah, 'tis a wild region, and rich in mineral deposits perhaps, but danger attends the wayfarer. A misstep might send one into an abyss so deep that to look from the verge of the precipice makes the hardiest shudder. Along the edges of these cliffs, and winding upward and upward through the rough ravines and across barren tablelands, lead the narrow paths into the mountain fastnesses where the miners delve. It is like a journey to another world, Señor.

There were with me four Indians—men who knew the trails perfectly. I was behind them and the mule train. It was towards the close of our second day's journey into the range. A precipice such as I have pictured to you fell sheer from our feet into the valley of the Essequibo, for the path was upon the very verge of the cliff. Above us towered other cliffs, pile upon pile, the crowning table-land lost in the haze of distance. Opening upon the narrow trail was now and then a blind ravine, strewn with huge boulders, and furnishing support for an occasional stunted tree.

It was all so sudden, Señor. We could do nothing to help ourselves. I could not even unstrap the rifle which was slung across my back.

Out upon us from one of these dark fissures rushed a horde of huge-limbed savages. They came upon us without a cry, only the sound of their metal-soled sandals ringing on the rocky path apprised us of their approach.

My poor Indians were as unprepared as myself to meet the attack. A huge savage seized me as though I had been a child and dragged me to the cliff's edge. I struggled, but I believed my last moment of life had come as I saw the mule drivers, one after another, hurled from the verge of the precipice, and go whirling down into the awful depths. *Madre de Dios!* but it was an awful sight.

The savage who had seized me was of two minds, Señor. Once he held me over the abyss, then he drew back, and called his companions to him. They took away my weapons, and then my captor released me. But there was no use in my striving to escape.

As they conversed excitedly together, in a language perfectly unintelligible to me, I was able to view them at my leisure. They were really wonderful men, Señor. Perhaps not above the ordinary height of the peoples of Northern Europe, but much taller than we of Spain. Brawny and broad-shouldered were they, with every muscle developed to perfection.

Their bodies were covered with a kind of tunic, which left their arms and legs, from the knees down, free. These tunics were worked in intricate patterns. Their heads were covered by black, coarse hair falling to their shoulders and a close-fitting cap, with two feathers prominently fixed in front. Their feet were protected by sandals of soft deer-skin, laced tightly at the ankle, and soled by thin, over-lapping plates of gold, finished so cunningly that leather could have been no more pliable.

Their features were far different from those of the miserable Essequibo Indians. And their colour, though not quite so white as yourself, Señor, nor like the little one here, was much lighter than that of any native I had ever before seen. It was a bronze tint only, beneath which the blood, coursing freely, gave a ruddy glow quite impossible to picture.

A huge savage seized me.

By chance, you would say, the Indian who had seized me—the chief warrior of the party he was—had recognised the fact that I was not a black man. This saved my life. They decided to make me a prisoner, instead of ending my existence by tossing me over the precipice.

They put me in their midst, turned the mule train about, and by a rugged, tortuous path descended to the valley. By nightfall the river's bank was reached.

I was treated with consideration. I could not complain, Señor. They were not brutal towards me, and their language was pleasing to listen to. There were no rough or guttural tones to it. Their speech flowed smoothly like a quiet stream.

In a swamp the White Indians had several roomy canoes in hiding. The pack train was unloaded, and all the goods deposited in the canoes. Then the mules were killed and we embarked. Running water hides all trails, Señor.

These Indians were on their way back to

their homes beyond the Makarapans. They paddled in relays, night and day. I slept a good part of the time. Sleep is the philosopher's refuge.

I looked in wonder, Señor, on those savages at the paddles. They were machines, tireless. Their bronze bodies, moving with rhythmic precision as they buried their paddles in the water, inspired admiration.

Days passed during this journey. Night followed day, and day night in seemingly endless succession. At length the party left the main stream, and took to a branch leading deep into the mountains towards the north. It was a wilderness. Soon the foothills were behind us, and the swiftly flowing river became walled on either hand by precipices. Thousands of feet they towered above us, as though the river had split a passage for itself through the very heart of the sierras. For many leagues the woodskins were driven up the stream, while no landing place appeared on either side. The water lapped the foot of the rocks on the one hand and the other.

The party left the main stream

But, Señor, my tongue runs on like an old woman's. When I think of that journey I live over again every incident. There are some things one can never forget, Señor.

At length the White Indians reached their home. The mountain range was passed. A deep valley, surrounded by verdure-clad hills, was the site. Señor, you would scarce believe me did I relate the magnificence of the city—for a city it was, a city of palaces, although no structure was more than one storey in height. A titanic wall surrounded the town—a wall which giants must have raised.

I had observed the golden sandals and the marvellously ornamented tunics of the Indians with wonder, but the magnificence of the barbaric display, as we landed at the quay before the city gate, awed me. A throng of richly-dressed warriors and their women welcomed my captors. Dyed stuffs of brilliant hue made up the females' apparel, while the fawn-coloured tunic was the universal dress of the men. Massive gold bracelets covered the arms of the women, and other ornaments, beaten out of the same precious metal, were worn in profusion by both sexes.

I was scrutinised curiously, but none offered to harm me, nor did I suffer the least indignity. The woodskins were unladen, and the whole throng passed up to the entrance to the city.

The gate was two-leaved, made of some heavy wood, but encrusted without entirely of gold. Where the Indians obtained the precious metal I never discovered, but the mines must have equalled those of Ophir.

Within the gate a broad road, paved with quarried stone, and the crevices filled with

cement, led into the heart of the city. They took no pains to guard me, but in the midst of the crowd of chattering Indians I went forward. Finally we arrived at a huge plaza, in the centre of which was a structure which I knew at once to be a temple.

It was no higher than the other buildings, but it covered a vast area, and was surmounted by a small cupola, heavily ornamented with gold. A broad, low flight of steps led to the arched entrance, and two rows of elaborately sculptured pillars upheld a gilded portico.

As the throng approached, the deep clanging note of a gong sounded from within the temple, and in a moment the head of a procession appeared, and filed slowly down the steps into the court. The chattering of the White Indians immediately ceased, and they all prostrated themselves. I was left standing alone in their midst.

A half-naked Indian beat the gong at the head of the procession. Behind him came the chief priest, a huge man, his head covered with a barbaric dress of brilliantly-coloured feathers, with broad plates of gold hanging from his ears. His dress was a long scarlet robe, reaching to his ankles, but leaving the arms, on which were a number of ornamental bands, bare. Behind him were a dozen assistant priests.

The Indians arose when the gong stopped, and, parting, left me standing before the priests. The chief then began a long harangue in a monotonous voice, and by his gestures I knew, Señor, that I was the subject of his talk. Finally, he called out the crews of the canoes, and appeared to question them. They replied with every mark of respect, and brought forward the gun and pistols with which I had been armed; of these the assistant priests took charge. The old priest seemed to bless the people with his face and hands raised towards the sun, and then dismissed them. Then he beckoned me to go before, and I was taken into the temple.

Within, two of the white-robed assistants led me through long, semi-lighted passages to a small room which appeared to be at the rear of the building. There was a low couch covered with a jaguar skin, and a rug made of another upon the stone floor. Of other furniture there was none.

One of the priests brought me water in which to bathe, while the other brought food. Then they left me. There were two entrances to the room, but upon trial I found both securely barred. I was a prisoner, but evidently my captors were kindly disposed towards me—for the present, at least.

I bathed my body, ate the food, and stretched myself upon the stone couch. A crash of cymbals and gongs awakened me. It was dawn, for the first warm light penetrated to my room through a small window. The voices of many people chanting reached my ear.

After a time the same priest brought me food again and, departing, left one of the doors ajar. I took this as an intimation that I was to have more freedom, so I explored such corridors and apartments as were not barred to me. The temple seemed deserted, yet all through that day, as I paced the corridors or reclined upon the couch in what I looked upon as my own apartment, I at times heard a cry—the thin, sharp cry of a child.

At first I paid little heed to the sound; but when I heard it repeated so frequently my curiosity was aroused. The great temple was so silent and seemingly tenantless, that the child's cry worried me. It may be, I told myself, Señor, that a child was shut into one of the apartments and forgotten. But look as I might I could not find the room from which the sound proceeded.

I only saw the priest at the time for meals, and thus I passed the first day of my confinement in the temple. It was lonely, Señor, and I saw no mode of escape. Many corridors and rooms were open to me, but beyond them were heavily barred doors. The windows, high in the walls, were only narrow slits through the thick masonry.

But when night came my priestly attendants gave me an unexpected, and on their part unintentional, opportunity to gain the front of the temple. It was long after my evening meal, and I had lain down on my couch for the night, when the hollow echoes of the great structure were set ringing by the deep clanging of brazen gongs and the crash of cymbals.

I sprang up and went into the corridor. Between the bursts of sound I could hear the

tread of a multitude of sandaled feet upon the pavement. I groped from passage to passage through the darkness, getting nearer and nearer to the uproar. At intervals narrow ribbons of grey light thrown across the way marked the openings to the outside air.

Suddenly I came out into an ante-chamber of the main audience room of the temple. Lights blazed from the central pillars, but where I stood the shadows were as deep as night. The latter end of a procession was just passing down the steps into the court. I could plainly see all that went on in the plaza before the temple entrance.

A great company was gathered there, their faces revealed by innumerable blazing torches. Just before the steps was a low, broad altar. The priests were grouped about this altar, the huge chief in the centre.

As the multitude of sandals ceased to clatter on the pavement, the voice of the chief priest rose in monotonous monologue. Suddenly the crash of cymbals broke once more upon the night, the torches were thrown to the ground and stamped out in an instant, and the people broke into a low chant. It was inexpressibly solemn, Señor.

The people had been blotted out in the darkness, the dim starlight only glancing here and there on a metal point in some head-dress as the throng swayed to and fro. But, above the wooded heights across the river, a red glow was spreading along the horizon. At first I thought it fire, but in a moment the fact that the moon was rising was impressed upon my mind.

The chant ceased. The light above the hilltops grew apace, spreading farther and farther along the horizon. Silence brooded over the throng in the plaza, the lights in the temple revealing the outlines of the priests still in the same positions.

Suddenly the rim of the rising orb appeared. It was at the full, and as brilliant as only a tropical moon can be. The Indians seemed scarcely to breathe while the glorious Queen of Night slowly rose. I think they were at prayer. Mother of God! Señor, they were heathen—but who knows the right?

Higher it rose till the great plaza, and the altar, and the temple steps, were flooded with white light. Then there was a movement among the priests. One in the rear stepped forward, carefully bearing some thing in his arms, and stood before the chief. The chief's voice again rose in solemn monotone as he received the burden.

Then, for the first time, I saw what it was. The moonlight revealed both the tall priest and his burden as plain as day. It was a child—an infant—which he held so carefully in his arms.

I crept forward to the very entrance of the temple, and stood within a few yards only of the group of priests. The chief ceased speaking, the cymbals commenced again, and the great concourse of people burst forth into another chant. The child was raised high in the air towards the rising moon.

Then its wrappings fell apart, and I beheld not an Indian child, but a beautiful little creature, as fair, Señor, as alabaster, with a head covered by little golden ringlets—in truth, a pink and white blossom of childhood.

Then the ceremony was over. The child was tenderly given to an assistant, the chief priest blessed the people, and I hurried back to my apartment that my presence might not be discovered.

Curiosity as to the child kept me awake. Such a fair-cheeked babe could not be an offspring of these Indians. I was fain to think that I was not the only alien in the city. If so, how could I communicate with those who, probably like myself, were prisoners of the White Indians?

I was awakened again at sunrise by the cymbals and gong. The priests welcomed the orb of day. They worshipped both the sun and the moon.

My attendants came so regularly that I knew when to expect them, and between their visits I explored every cranny and nook of the temple which was open to me. I did not do this from idle curiosity, but with the thought of escape ever before my mind. You may be sure, Señor, that I used my eyes to my best ability.

That second day of my confinement I stumbled upon a room which I had not observed before. The entrance was through a narrow passage which had previously been

closed. The interior of that temple was like a labyrinth, Señor.

This room was larger than that in which I slept, and beside the skin-covered stone couch there were several low stools; the White Indians evidently used but little wood in the furnishing of their dwellings.

But that which attracted my attention was a woollen skirt which lay across the couch. It was not at all like the garments of the Indian women, and was, indeed, of European manufacture. There could be no doubt of that. I searched farther, and found one shoe, greatly worn and cut, as though by rough travel; a button boot, such as I had seen in the *tiendas* (stores) of Georgetown. It was an awful thought, Señor, but I could not doubt that a woman—possibly a woman of my own land—was a prisoner among these savages.

I searched the apartment thoroughly. A little light entered through the two narrow windows, but in the corners it was dusk. Had I not been so anxious for further trace of the unknown prisoner, I should never have found what I did. But suddenly, hidden away in one corner about on a level with my eyes, I saw suspicious marks on one of the oblong stones of which the wall of the cell was built.

I drew out my match box, and flashed a light upon the stone. It took but an instant to decipher the marks. In straggling letters, marked in some pale red colouring upon the stone, was a single word in Inglese, Señor—

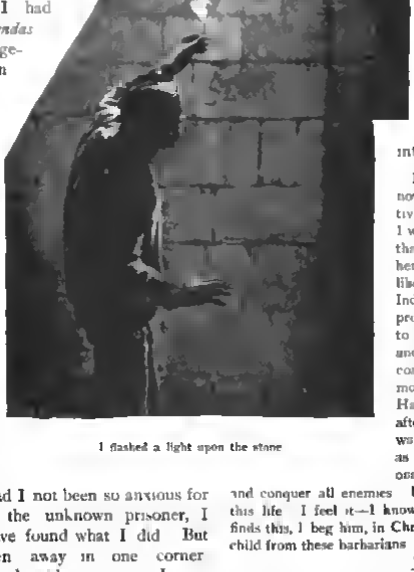
SEARCH

My match went out, but I felt the block and found it loosened. With some difficulty I drew it from the wall. There had been a narrow cavity behind it, and in this cavity was a folded paper. I secured it, replaced the stone, and fled back to my own apartment.

Señor, I have that paper yet. See, it is here, old, yellowed, but the inscription is still readable. Ah, *Dios!* when I think under what conditions the poor creature wrote those words, my heart bleeds, Señor. Take it in your hand and read. Its every word is burned into my brain. Listen:

I am an Inglese woman, now three months in captivity among these savages. I was found wandering in the forests and brought here, and have been treated like a goddess. These Indians have a tradition, prophesying their return to the homes of their ancestors on the west coast, led by a child of the moon. My child, Estelle Hartley, born two months after I reached this city, is worshipped by the Indians as the Moon Child—the one that shall lead them and conquer all enemies. I shall soon pass from this life. I feel it—I know it. If any Christian finds this, I beg him, in Christ's name, to save my child from these barbarians.

JOSEPHINE HARTLEY.



I flashed a light upon the stone

I understood it all then, Señor. The ceremony of the night before, in which the White Indians welcomed the rising moon, was explained. And that little one was Señora Hartley's, born under the trying circumstances of captivity. What she must have suffered, what endured, while wandering

in the wilderness in her then delicate condition! Think you, Señor, that sins as that against her are forgiven?

Well, Señor, let me hasten.

I swore a great oath that I would find that child and escape with her from the city. Every moment of my waking hours was given up to that end.

As the days passed the priests guarded me less, and the vast labyrinth of the temple was gradually explored. I found that the Moon Child was usually lodged in a rear wing of the temple—the women's apartments. The priests' wives seemed not to be allowed in the main building. I was never molested wherever I went. I was but one; they were many, and they looked upon me as harmless. But my eyes were open.

I even found the room where my rifle and revolvers were stored. The White Indians evidently knew little about firearms, for my ammunition had not been taken from me. I still wore my cartridge belt about my waist beneath my coat. But I did not care to draw suspicion by taking the weapons. I realised that I must obtain possession of the little one, of the weapons, and escape, at one stroke.

I was left mainly to myself, Señor, as I have said, and particularly was this true in mine own apartment. Sometimes I was made to grind grain in the women's court at the rear of the temple; but otherwise no labour was required of me.

My mind was often disturbed as to what could be my captors' ultimate determination in regard to me. I learnt a few words of their language, but not enough to intelligently ask questions or to understand their conversation. These sun worshippers, Señor, had no enviable reputation with the Indians further eastward. It was claimed they sacrificed human beings in their pagan rites; and truly, if the White Indians are descended from the ancient Peruvians, and history is to be believed, it was likely that I was reserved as a victim. *Quien sabe?*

Do you wonder then, Señor, that no stone of that great structure I left unexamined? The exits to the plaza all seemed guarded, as were likewise those at the rear, and I at times became desperate enough to contemplate tunnelling through the masonry. But I did not come to this, thanks be to Our Lady.

The rainy season came on, and the long, dark corridors of the temple grew chill. At night I was thankful for the jaguar skin on my floor for an extra covering as I slept. It was by this shift that I made my grand discovery. There was, Señor, a loose stone in the floor of the apartment.

I had walked over it a thousand times without a suspicion. But, while the rug was up one day, the discovery was made. The floor was of evenly laid flagging, each stone being about two feet square. I found it because it rocked a trifle as one stepped upon it. I tried it several times before the possible significance of the discovery flashed across my brain.

I stamped upon the stone again and again, and thought I distinguished a hollow echo from beneath. Down I dropped upon my knees and examined it. It certainly was loose—I could tilt it by pressing upon it with my hands. The mortar, which seemed to have been different from the adamant-like substance which filled the seams between the other stones, was broken and easily picked out.

But I could not lift the stone then. I covered the spot with the rug, and during the day carried to my room such articles as I could find to assist in prying up the stone.

Night came, and when I believed my section of the temple to be deserted I hung one of the jaguar skins over the window, lit a torch, and set to work. The task was arduous, but I achieved triumph at last. The stone was raised sufficiently to enable me to insert my hands. In a moment I had lifted it out of the way completely.

A dark well the size of the stone cover was revealed. I could not see its depth. A dank, fetid odour exuded from it, and when I thrust my torch into the opening it was snuffed out in an instant. A human being could not exist within the well, Señor.

The air from the opening soon made it necessary for me to remove the curtain from before my window, and for an hour or more I paced the corridor without while the atmosphere gradually cleansed itself. My impatience at the delay may be imagined.

I lit the torch finally, and ventured into my room. The air had cleared remarkably, although a dead, mouldy, odour arose from the hole I had uncovered. Upon trial, the torch burnt very well when thrust into it.

The light revealed a well, possibly fifteen feet deep, with protruding stones upon two sides, which would make descent or ascent comparatively easy. I hastily let myself into the well, and quickly reached the bottom. As I hoped, it was simply the entrance to a passage built of masonry, which ran horizontally away from the main shaft. This passage was of the height of a tall man, and three feet in width.

The floor and walls were not laid as smoothly as those above, but the torch lit up my surroundings well enough to keep my feet from stumbling. Great patches of green mould clung to the walls and ceiling, and the floor was slippery with it. But, Señor, liberty was before me, and I thought of these discomforts as nothing.

What the subterranean gallery had originally been I could not say. That it had not been entered for many years was certain. I stumbled on for perhaps two hundred yards, and then, to my horror and despair, I reached the end.

A huge block of granite confronted me. It filled the end of the passage completely, and was hewn perfectly square at the edges so as to tightly fit the sides, floor, and ceiling of the underground corridor.

I was in despair, Señor. My hopes had mounted like a bird when I first discovered the passage, and now they sank to the deepest pit of human dejection. From the direction I had been led I hardly believed myself away from the confines of the temple. And here was this blank wall confronting me.

I threw my torch to the ground, and stamped upon it in rage. Was this, Señor, to be the end of my trial? Were all exits from the temple blocked? I was mad—desperate. With fierce energy I threw myself against the rock which barred my passage. It was childish, I know, Señor, but I was a being without hope. Such an one loses all manhood.

But stay! what was this? The wall against which I had cast myself moved, or had I lost my reason? It rocked perceptibly, and as I threw myself again and again upon it, it turned slowly, as though it were hung in a socket at top and bottom, grinding dismally upon the rocks it touched. A breath of fresher air came from beyond, and then a light broke upon my startled vision.

The block had swung half round, leaving a narrow space on either side, and through

I achieved triumph at last.

these openings I beheld a sight which transfixed me with surprise.

A large, oblong apartment was revealed, in the centre of which stood a low altar, entirely covered with gold, and with rude representations of the sun and moon worked in the metal. The workmanship seemed crude, but it was the enormous amount of gold used about the altar which surprised me. And yet that was not what brought the cry of amazement to my lips. In the corner of the room, stacked up as though they were so many bricks, was a great pile of metal bars, as smooth as though run in moulds, *and these bars were of gold!*

Señor, there were millions of money in that heap, I believe.

Light descended by way of an opening in the ceiling, to which a flight of stone steps pointed the way of exit. I crept through into the room, and mounted the steps with caution. They led into the main audience chamber of the temple, now deserted, but lit by several lamps, in which was burning some resinous substance.

Feeling assured the coast was clear, I returned to the subterranean room and pursued my explorations. From one corner a low, arched passage led away in an opposite direction from that by which I had entered. A strong current of air blew through this opening, and I believed it led to the outer world. I ventured into the gloom without hesitation, and groped on for several rods. Then the passage widened into another apartment.

Fortunately I had brought the torch. This I now ignited, and pressed on. I crossed several empty apartments, some of them hewn out of the solid rock, and entered the low passage again. The night air blew stronger. I was passing beneath the sleeping city, and my pocket compass told me that I was pursuing a southerly direction. The building of that underground gallery must have been a titanic labour.

Finally the current of air grew so strong that I extinguished my light, believing myself near the exit. And I was not mistaken. A few rods further, and I came to where the floor of the gallery took an upward slant. I crawled up the inclined plane and in a moment the upper part of my body was in the open air.

The exit was a narrow hole beside a huge boulder, about which grew thick brush. I was on the hillside, and the city wall was below me. I was free!

Ah, Señor, my heart leapt with joy! After long months of captivity the freedom of the woods was mine. I wept tears of gladness, and, with no thought but that of escape from the hateful durance, I crawled through the aperture and set my face away from the city.

You think it strange, Señor, that I should be so selfish. Ah, *Dios!* what state I was in you cannot know. I was mad, Señor, and for the time I had forgotten the paper written by Señora Hartley, and of the Moon Child. A desperate man, Señor, is but a trifle above the beast of the field. *Madre de Dios!* that I should have forgotten the little one for even a moment.

I reached the summit of the hill. Above the distant mountain tops, towards the coast, a streak of light was mounting up the sky. In two hours the sun would rise, and the priests would quickly discover my escape. And then, Señor, as my mind reverted to this thought, the crushing fact of my cowardice in leaving the little one to the mercies of the White Indians smote me. I stopped to think. In an instant I turned back and ran down the hill.

Not a moment was to be lost, was I to regain my place of captivity before my absence had been discovered. On my route I picked up a resinous branch to serve as a torch. Once in the passage I set this blazing, and hurried back to the temple. It was a straight road, and in an hour's time I was in the room of the golden altar.

All was quiet. My escape had not been discovered. I entered the passage leading to my room, threw myself against the swinging rock, and closed it as it was before, and, by the blessing of our Lady, reached my place in safety.

But one thing, Señor, I was determined on. The slightest chance for escape I would grasp. I set about studying the habits of the woman who attended the Moon Child more closely than ever. I soon learnt where she slept at night, and, although the

doors to the main portion of the temple were barred to me, I could go into the women's court by day or night.

I will not weary you long, Señor. But as I relate these things to you, I seem to live over again that time of trial.

At last the hour came. I chose a night when the temple seemed to be quiet at an early hour. I stole into the gallery where my weapons, with other trophies of the White Indians' prowess, were stored. I secured the revolvers only, for they would be of the most service to me, despite that they were somewhat rusted. I threw the ammunition belonging to the rifle away, as its weight was considerable.

The old creature started up.

Then I crept into the court of the women. The doors facing it were open. Keeping in the shadow, I gained the portal of the room in which the little one was asleep. In the passage-way I stepped over a sleeping guard. Within an old woman dozed beside the couch on which was lain the Moon Child.

The old creature started up as I gained her side. I had to do it, Señor. But the guard at the door was aroused by the scuffle, and sat up suddenly. I dropped beside the couch, as still as death.

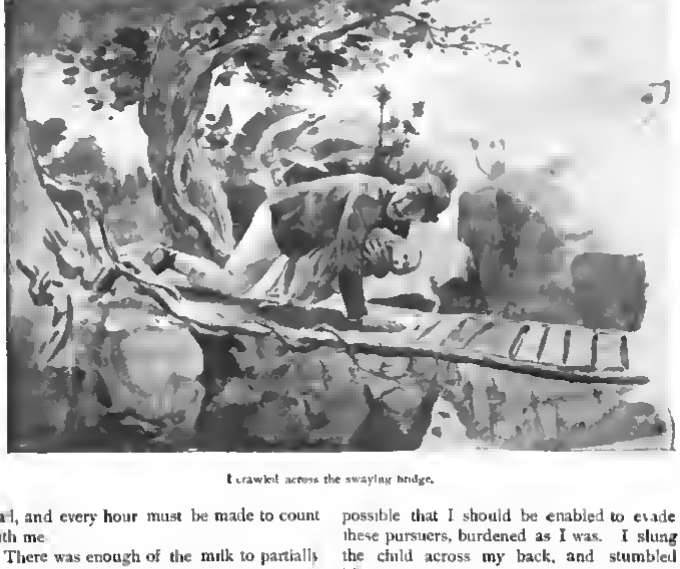
The guard settled back against the door-frame, and, making sure he slept, I picked up the sleeping babe, wrapped it in a blanket, and crept back to my room. I had saved some cakes and dried meat, and these, with a stone flask of goat's milk which I had brought from the couch where the child lay, I thrust inside my shirt. I made a sling of the blanket for the child, and with her on my back crept into the well, letting down the cover, with the jaguar skin over it, as I descended.

Praised be the saints, Señor, she did not awake! I hurried through the secret passage, pushed back the stone at its exit, and stepped into the room of the altar. I closed the granite portal, hoping that the Indians would thereby be at a loss to explain my disappearance.

Burdened already as I was, the demon of gold possessed me as I again beheld that heap of yellow bars. The sight of it was too tempting to resist. My coat was of strong material. I hastily ripped a seam in the lining, and slipped eight or ten of the thin bars inside, arranging them so that the weight would be evenly distributed. I tucked a couple of bars in each side pocket as well. With this additional weight I hurried into the long gallery leading to the outer world—and freedom!

Once before we left the tunnel the little one awoke, but I easily hushed her cries with some of the goat's milk. Again outside, I sped up the mountain side, and before midnight the sleeping city of the White Indians was blotted out of my sight.

League after league I travelled over the rocky way, getting deeper and deeper into the range. The added weight of the gold dragged me down, but I would not leave it. It was almost impossible to travel during the heat of the day, but I knew it would be only a question of time ere the Indians found my



I crawled across the swaying bridge.

trail, and every hour must be made to count with me.

There was enough of the milk to partially satisfy the little one that day, but after that I was worried continually about her. *Gracias*, Señor! the straits I was put to to find the child food. Once I caught sight of a mountain goat with her kid. I shot her, and drove the kid away from its dead dam while I drew forth the milk while the udder was yet warm.

For three days I travelled day and night, with but short terms of rest. I was still on the west bank of the river. So deep had I penetrated into the mountain range now that the stream was running noisily in the gorge far below me. It was not easy travelling upon these highlands.

But hope spurred me on, Señor, until, just at sunrise on the fourth day, I looked back along the track I had come from the pinnacle of rock to which I had climbed, and beheld a large party of my recent captors coming up the mountain side. They did not see me, but they were following closely on my trail.

Despair seized me, Señor. It seemed impossible that I should be enabled to evade these pursuers, burdened as I was. I slung the child across my back, and stumbled blindly on. Be captured again I would not; rather I would dash myself from the summit of the cliffs into the stream below.

Suddenly I discovered that my footsteps were following a rugged path among the trees and boulders. Man had made that path, and countless feet had trod the way. I pressed forward, hoping I knew not what.

Ere long I came out upon the very verge of the cliff. Directly before me was a narrow swinging bridge across the stream, slung like a spider's web from cliff to cliff. The gorge was less than thirty feet in width, and two huge *lianas*, as thick as one's leg, had been strung from one side to the other. Across these thin planks had been placed, stayed by smaller creepers. Such a bridge one frequently sees in the mountains, Señor, especially along the old Indian paths.

The situation flashed across my mind. For miles up and down the stream there was no other opportunity for crossing. My pursuers were all on the western side of the

river. If I could put the gorge between them and me, and destroy the bridge, I should have an advantage that they could never regain.

The thought gave me courage. Knowing my bodily weakness, I got down on my hands and knees and crawled across the swaying bridge. Quickly I hid the little one behind a boulder, and set about destroying the structure.

I drew forth my knife, intending to cut the *lianas*, but that, upon trial, proved useless. The vines were too thick to be severed quickly with such a knife as I possessed. It was likewise impossible to unfasten them.

Time was passing. Ere long the White Indians would appear, and all would be lost. There yet remained one way of destroying the bridge.

There were plenty of dry limbs and such inflammable material about. I heaped a great pile of this refuse upon my end of the bridge, and set it ablaze. At that instant I beheld several figures on the summit of the opposite cliff, some distance up the gorge. They were the vanguard of the White Indians.

I, myself, was hidden from them, but they recognised the significance of the fire. They disappeared at once, and I knew they were racing along the path leading to the bridge.

I had, ere this, cleaned and loaded my weapons. I laid them upon the rock before me, that they might be in readiness, and heaped more fuel on the fire. Then I lay down, shielded by a low boulder.

In a few moments the White Indians appeared. The fire was now blazing fiercely, and I hoped it was having some effect upon the tough creepers.

Those Indians were brave, Señor. The first man hesitated not an instant on the brink of the gorge, but sprang at once upon the bridge. I waited till he was half-way across, and until a second had started ere I fired.

The bullet could not fail to hit the mark at so short a range. The Indian staggered to his knees. The one behind him sprang forward and seized him by the shoulders. Again I fired, and the two toppled from the bridge and plunged into the abyss.

A cry of rage broke from the crowd on the other cliff, and a flight of arrows followed. But they could do me no harm, Señor, unless I exposed myself. My only fear was that the fuel I had last thrown upon the fire would not be sufficient to destroy the bridge.

Another rush was made. I waited until the foremost had all but crossed. It would not do to miss a shot. Then my revolver cracked in quick repetition. One after another spun round or leapt in the air, and fell. Fear nerved my arm, Señor. My aim was deadly.

Four fell at that charge, and two were left lying across the bridge. The foe retired a moment, giving me opportunity to reload my weapons.

My aim was deadly

Ere hostilities could be resumed, the main body of the White Indians came up. They numbered more than half a hundred. The odds were great, yet I lost not heart.

They formed in line, and started at a run for the bridge. As they swept up to the verge of the chasm they broke into a wild chant—the death song of their tribe. Bravely they courted death that the honour of their tribe might be sustained, and the Moon Child recovered.

In my revolvers were twelve bullets—twelve only. There would be no opportunity to reload this time. Possibly my enemies may have known a little something about firearms, after all, or it may have been simply courage on their part. With care the first twelve men might be stopped, then I would be at their mercy.

I ran behind the boulder where the little one lay. I knew what I should do. If the bridge held after my weapons were emptied, I should seize her in my arms, and leap from the cliff. Death was better than captivity.

Again and again my pistol cracked. At each explosion an Indian dropped, either dead or wounded, into the stream below. The bridge swayed frightfully; it was a wonder, Señor, how they kept their feet. Faster and faster they leapt upon it.

The chambers of one weapon were empty. In a moment all would be over. Yet I failed not to fire the remaining cartridges with unerring aim.

Suddenly there was a loud snap, and the bridge plunged to one side. One of the *lianas* had at last parted! Half-a-dozen of the Indians were thrown down, but they clung desperately to the wreck.

Then the other parted, and the bridge, with its human freight swung with a crash against the opposite wall of the gorge.

A despairing yell greeted this catastrophe, but I waited to see no more. I seized the little one again, and hurried away from the dreadful scene.

Well, Señor, my tale is told. A week we wandered in the wilderness, and then a party of miners found us, more dead than alive. Months later the little one and I reached the coast.

No, Señor, there was not a trace of her relatives. I had the Inglese consul write, though 'twould have broken my old heart to lose her. She is mine now, and the wealth I brought from the city of the White Indians shall be hers.

See, the little one has gone to sleep here, in my arms. I have been tedious, have I not, Señor?

DARK DIGNUM

BERNARD CAPES

'I do not go nigher, sir,' said my landlady's father.

I made out his warning through the shrill piping of the wind, and stopped and took in the plunging seascape from where I stood. The boom of the waves came up from a vast distance beneath; sky and the horizon of running water seemed hurrying upon us over the lip of the rearing cliff.

'It crumbles,' he cried. 'It crumbles near the edge like as frosted mortar. I've seen a noble sheep, sir, eighty pound of mutton, browsin' here one moment, and seen it go down the next in a puff of white dust.'

He began punching with his staff at one of a number of little green mounds that lay about us.

'I could tell you a story of these,' he said. 'Do you know where we stand?'

"On the site of the old churchyard?"

"Aye, sir; though it still bore the name of the *new* yard in my first memory of it."

"Is that so? And what is the story?"

He dwelt a minute dense with introjection. Suddenly he sat himself down upon a mossy bulge in the turf, and waved me to a place beside him.

"The old order changeth," he said. "The only lasting foundations of men's works shall be godliness and law-abidin'. Long ago they builded a new church—here, high up on the cliffs where the waters could not reach; and, lo! the waters wrought beneath, and sapped the foundations, and the church fell into the sea.'

"So I understand," I said.

"The godless are fools," he chattered knowingly. "Look here at these bents—thirty of 'em, maybe. Tombstones, sir; perished, like man's works, and the decayed stumps of them coated with salt grass."

He pointed to the ragged edge of the cliff a score of paces away.

"They raised it out there," he said; "and further a temple of bonded stone. They

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thought to bribe the Lord to a partnership in their corruption, and He answered by castin' down the fair mansion into the waves."

I said: "Who—who, my friend?"

"They that builded the church," he answered.

"Well," said I, "it seems a certain foolishness to set the edifice so close to the edge."

Again he chuckled.

"It was close—close, as you say; yet none so close as you might think nowadays. Time hath gnawed here like a rat on a cheese. But the foolishness appeared in settin' the brave mansion between the winds and its own graveyard. Let the dead lie seawards, one had thought; and the church inland where we stand."

"Certainly to have done so would show the better providence."

"Sir, I said the foolishness *appeared*. But, I tell you, there was foresight in the disposition—in neighbourin' the buildin' to the cliff path. *For so they could the easter enter unobserved, and store their kegs of Nantes brandy in the belly of the organ.*

"They? Who were they?"

"Why, who—but two-thirds of all Dunburgh?"

"Smugglers?"

"It was a nest of 'em—traffickers in the eternal fire o' week days, and on the Sabbath, who so sanctimonious? But honesty comes not from the washin', like a clean shirt; nor can the piety of one day purge the evil of six. They built their church amigh the margin, forasmuch as it was handy, and that they thought 'Surely the Lord will not undermine His own.' A rare community o' blasphemers, fro' the parson that took his reglar toll of the organ-loft, to him that sounded the keys and pulled out the joyous stops as if they was so many spigots to what lay behind."

"Of when do you speak?"

"I speak of nigh a century and a half ago. I speak o' the Seven Years' War, and of Exciseman Jones, that, twenty year after he were buried, took his revenge on the cliff side of the man that done him to death."

"And who was that?"

"They called him Dark Dignum, sir—a wild, reckless smuggler, and as wicked as he was bold."

"Is your story about him?"

"Aye, it is, and of my grandfather, that were a boy when they laid, and was glad to lay, the exciseman deep as they could dig, for the sight of his sooty face in his coffin was worse than a bad dream."

"Why was that?"

The old man edged closer to me, and spoke in a sibilant voice.

"He were murderer'd, sir—foully and horribly—for all they could never bring it home to the culprit."

"Will you tell me about it?"

He was nothing loth. The wind, the place of perished tombs; the very wild blown locks of this "withered apple-john" were eerie accompaniments to the tale he piped in my ear.

"When my grandfather were a boy," he said, "there lighted in Dunburgh Exciseman Jones. Praps the village had gained an ill reputation. Praps Exciseman Jones's predecessor had failed to secure the confidence o' the exekitive. At any rate the new man was little to the fancy of the village. He was a grim, sour-looking, brass-bound galloot, and incorruptible—which was the worst. The keg o' brandy left on his door-step o' New Year's Eve hail been better unspiled and run into the gutter: for it led him somehow to the identification of the innocent that done it, and he hail him by the heels in a twinklin'.

"The squire snorted at the man, and the parson looked askance, but Dark Dignum he swore he'd be even with him if he swung for it.

"At that time Dark Dignum was a young man, with a reputation above his years for profaneness and audacity. Ugly things there were said about him; and amongst many wicked he was feared for his wickedness. Exciseman Jones had his eye on him, and that was bad for Exciseman Jones.

"Now one murk December night, Exciseman Jones staggered home with a long bloody slice down his scalp, and the red drip from it spottin' the cobble-stones.

"'Summut fell on him from a winder,' said Dark Dignum a little later, as he were drinkin' hisself hoarse in the 'Black Boy.' 'Summut fell on him retributive, as you might call it. For, would you believe it, the

man had at the moment been threatenin' me? He did; he said 'I know about you, Dignum, and for all your blessed ingenuity, I'll bring you with a crack to the ground yet.

"What had happened? Nobody knew, sir. But Exciseman Jones was in his bed for a fortnight, and when he got on his legs again, it was pretty evident there was a hate between the two men that only blood-spillin' could satisfy.

"So far as is known, they never spoke to one another again. They played their game of death in silence—the lawful, cold and unfathomable; the unlawful, swaggerin' and cruel—and twenty year separated the first move and the last.

"This were the first, sir—as Dark Dignum leaked it out long after in his cups. This were the first; and it brought Exciseman Jones to his grave on the cliff here.

"It were a deep, soft, summer night, and the young smuggler sat by hisself in the long room of the 'Black Boy.' Now, I tell you, he were a fox-ship intriguer—grand, I should call him, in the aloneness of his villany. He would play his dark games out of his own hand; and sure of all his wickedness this game must have seemed the sum.

"I say he sat by hisself; and I hear the listenin' ghost of him call me a liar. For there were another body present, though invisible to mortal eye; and that second party were Exciseman Jones, who was hidden up the chimney.

"How had he inveigled him there? Ah! they've met and worried that point out since. No other will ever know the truth this side the grave. But reports come to be whispered; and report said as how Dignum had made an appintment with a bodiless master of a smack as never floated, to meet him in the 'Black Boy,' and arrange for to run a cargo as would never be shipped; and that somehow he managed to acquent Exciseman Jones of this dissemblin' appintment, and to secure his presence in hidin' to witness it.

"That's conjecture; for Dignum never let on so far. But what *is* known for certain is that Exciseman Jones—who were as daring and determined as his enemy, p'raps more so—for some reason was in the chimney, on to a grating on which he had managed to lower hisself from the roof; and that he could, if given time, have scrambled up agen with difficulty, but was debarred from going lower. And, further, this is known—that, as Dignum sat on, pretendin' to yawn, and huggin' his black intent, a little sut plopped down the chimney, and scattered on the coals of the laid fire beneath.

"At that—'Curse this warm,' said he 'The room's as chill as a belfry,' and he got to his feet, with a secret grin, and strolled to the hearthstone.

"'I wonder,' said he, 'will the landlord object if I ventur' upon a glint of fire for comfort's sake?' and he pulled out his flint and steel, struck a spark, and, with no more feelin' than he'd express in lightin' a pipe, set the flame to the sticks.

"The trapped rat above never stirred or give tongue. My God! What a man! Such a nature could afford to bide and bide—aye, for twenty year, if need be.

"Dignum would have enjoyed the sound of a cry, but he never got it. He listened with the grin fixed on his face; and, of a sudden, he heard a scramblin' struggle, like as a dog with the colic jumpin' at a wall; and, presently, as the sticks blazed and the smoke rose denser, a thick coughin', as of a consumptive man under the bed-clothes. Still no cry, nor any appeal for mercy—no, not from the time he lit the fire till a horrible rattle come down, which was the last twitches of somethin' that choked and died on the sooty grain' above.

"When all was quiet, Dignum he knocks with his foot on the floor, and sits hisself down before the hearth, with a face like a pillow for innocence.

"'I were chilled, and lit it,' says he to the landlord. 'You don't mind?'

"Mind! Who would have ventured to cross Dark Dignum's fancies?

"He give a boisterous laugh, and ordered in a double noggin of hummin' stuff.

"'Here,' he says, when it comes 'is to the health of Exciseman Jones, that swore to bring me to the ground.'

"'To the ground,' mutters a thick voice from the chimney.

"'My God!' says the landlord, 'there's something up there.'

"Somethin' there was, and terrible to look upon when they brought it to light. The creature's struggles had ground the sut into its face, and its nails were black below the quick.

"Were those words the last of its death throe or an echo from beyond? Ah! We may question; but they were heard by two men.

"Dignum went free. What could they prove agen him? Not that he knew there was aught in the chimney when he lit the fire. The other would scarcely have acquent him of his plans. And Exciseman Jones was hurried into his grave alongside the church up here.

"And therein he lay for twenty year, despite that, not a twelvemonth after his coming, the sacrilegeous house itself sunk roarin' into the waters. For the Lord would have none of it, and bidin' His time, struck through a fortnight of deluge, and hurled church and cliff into ruin. But the yard remained, and, nighest the seaward edge of it, Exciseman Jones slept in his fearful windin' sheet, and bided *his* time.

"'My God!' says the landlord, 'there's something up there.'"

"It came when my grandfather were a young man of thirty, and mighty close and confidential with Dark Dignum. God forgive him! Doubtless he were led away by the older smuggler, that had a grace of villainy about him, 'tis said, and used Lord Chesterfield's printed letters for waddin' to his bullets.

"Now, sir, I must tell you that all these years the cliff edge agen the graveyard, where it was broke off, was scabbin' into the sea below in a slow, reg'lar process of decay. But still they used this way of ascent for their ungodly traffic.

"It was a cloudy night in March, with scud and a fitful moon; and there was a sloop in the offin, and under the shore a loaded boat, that had just pulled in with muffled rowlocks. Out of this Dark Dignum was the first to sling hisself a brace of rundlets; and my grandfather followed with two more. They made softly for the cliff path—began the ascent—were half way up.

"Whizz! A stone of chalk went by them, and slapped into the rubble below.

"'Some more of St. Dunstan's gravel!' cried Dignum, pantin' out a reckless laugh under his load. And on they went agen.

"Hwish! A bigger lump came like a

"Stickin out of the cliff side, was half the body of Exciseman Jones."

thunderbolt and the wind of it took the smuggler's hat, and sent it swoopin into the darkness like a bird.

"'Thunder!' said Dignum, 'the cliff's breaking away.'

"The words was hardly out of his mouth, when there flew such a volley of chalk stones as made my grandfather though none had touched him, fall upon the path where he stood, and begin to gabble out what he could call to mind of the prayers for the dyin'. He was in the midst of it when he heard a scream come from his companion as froze the very marrow in his bones. He looked up, thinkin' his hour had come. 'My God!' What a sight he saw! The moon had shone out of a sudden, and the light of it struck down on Dignum's face, and that was the colour of dirty parchment. And he looked higher, and give a sort of sob.

"For there, stickin out of the cliff side was half the body of Exciseman Jones, with its arms stretched abroad, *and it was clawin out lumps of chalk, and hurlin' them down at Dignum!*

"And even as he took this in through his terror, a great ball of white came hurtlin', and went full on to the man's face with a splash—and he were spun down into the deep night below, a nameless thing."

The old creature came to a stop, his eyes glinting with a febrile excitement.

"And what became of your grandfather?"

"My grandfather? There were somethin' happened made him renounce the devil. He died one of the elect. His youth were heedless and unregenerate; but 'tis said after he were turned thirty he never smiled agen."

By Conan Doyle.

"What do you make of her, Allardyce?" I asked.

My second mate was standing beside me upon the poop, with his short, thick legs astretch, for the gale had left a considerable swell behind it, and our two quarter-boats nearly touched the water with every roll. He steadied his glass against the mizen shrouds, and he looked long and hard at this disconsolate stranger every time she came reeling up on to the crest of a roller and hung balanced for a few seconds before swooping down upon the other side. She lay so low in the water that I could only catch an occasional glimpse of a pea-green line of bulwark.

She was a brig, but her mainmast had been snapped short off some ten feet above the deck, and no effort seemed to have been made to cut away the wreckage, which floated, sails and yards, like the broken wing of a wounded gull, upon the water beside her. The foremast was still standing, but the foretopsail was flying loose, and the headsails were streaming out in long white penoons in front of her. Never have I seen a vessel which appeared to have gone through rougher handling.

But we could not be surprised at that for there had been times during the last three days when it was a question whether our own barque would ever see land again. For thirty-six hours we had kept her nose to it, and if the *Mary Sinclair* had not been as good a seaboat as ever left the Clyde, we could not have gone through. And yet here we were at the end of it with the loss only of our gig and of part of the starboard bulwark. It did not astonish us, however, when the smother had cleared away, to find that others had been less lucky, and that this mutilated brig, staggering about upon a blue sea, and under a cloudless sky, had been left, like a blinded man after a lightning flash, to tell of the terror which is past.

Allardyce, who was a slow and methodical Scotchman, stared long and hard at the little craft, while our seamen lined the bulwark or clustered upon the fore shrouds to have a view of the stranger. In latitude 20° and longitude 10°, which were about our bearings, one becomes a little curious as to whom one meets, for one has left the main lines of Atlantic commerce to the north. For ten days we had been sailing over a solitary sea.

"She's derelict, I'm thinking," said the second mate.

I had come to the same conclusion, for I could see no sign of life upon her deck, and there was no answer to the friendly wavings

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from our seamen. The crew had probably deserted her under the impression that she was about to founder.

"She can't last long," continued Allardyce, in his measured way. "She may put her nose down and her tail up any minute. The water's lipping up to the edge of her rail."

"What's her flag?" I asked.

"I'm trying to make out. It's got all twisted and tangled with the halyards. Yes, I've got it now, clear enough. It's the Brazilian flag, but it's wrong side up."

She had hoisted a signal of distress, then, before her people had abandoned her. Perhaps they had only just gone. I took the mate's glass and looked round over the tumultuous face of the deep blue Atlantic, still veined and starred with white lines and spoutings of foam. But nowhere could I see anything human beyond ourselves.

"There may be living men aboard," said I.

It was but a little distance, but it took some time to traverse.

"There may be salvage," muttered the second mate.

"Then we will run down upon her lee side, and lie to."

We were not more than a hundred yards from her when we swung our foreyard aback, and there we were, the barque and the brig ducking and bowing like two clowns in a dance.

"Drop one of the quarter-boats," said I. "Take four men, Mr Allardyce, and see what you can learn of her."

But just at that moment my first officer, Mr Armstrong, came on deck, for seven bells had struck, and it was but a few minutes off his watch. It would interest me to go myself to this abandoned vessel and to see what there might be aboard of her. So, with a word to Armstrong, I swung myself over the side, slipped down the falls, and took my place in the sheets of the boat.

It was but a little distance, but it took some time to traverse and so heavy was the roll, that often when we were in the trough of the sea, we could not see either the barque which we had left, or the brig which we were approaching. The sinking sun did not penetrate down there, and it was cold and dark in the hollows of the waves, but each passing billow heaved us up into the warmth and the sunshine once more. At each of these moments, as we hung upon a white-capped ridge between the two dark valleys, I caught a glimpse of the long pea-green line, and the nodding foremast of the brig, and I steered so as to come round by her stern, so that we might determine which was the best way of boarding her. As we passed her we saw the name *Nossa Senhora da Victoria* painted across her dripping counter.

"The weather side, sir," said the second mate. "Stand by with the boathook, carpenter!" An instant later we had jumped over the bulwarks, which were hardly higher

than our boat, and found ourselves upon the deck of the abandoned vessel.

Our first thought was to provide for our own safety in case—as seemed very probable—the vessel should settle down beneath our feet. With this object two of our men held on to the painter of the boat, and fended her off from the vessel's side, so that she might be ready in case we had to make a hurried retreat. The carpenter was sent to find out how much water there was, and whether it was still gaining, while the other seaman, Allardyce and myself, made a rapid inspection of the vessel and her cargo.

The deck was littered with wreckage and with hencoops, in which the dead birds were washing about. The boats were gone, with the exception of one, the bottom of which had been stove, and it was certain that the crew had abandoned the vessel. The cabin was in a deck house, one side of which had been beaten in by a heavy sea. Allardyce and I entered it, and found the captain's table as he had left it, his books and papers—all Spanish or Portuguese—scattered over it, with piles of cigarette ash everywhere. I looked about for the log, but could not find it.

"As likely as not he never kept one," said Allardyce. "Things are pretty slack aboard a South American trader, and they don't do more than they can help. If there was one it must have been taken away with him in the boat."

"I should like to take all these books and papers," said I. "Ask the carpenter how much time we have."

His report was reassuring. The vessel was full of water, but some of the cargo was buoyant, and there was no immediate danger of her sinking. Probably she would never sink, but would drift about as one of those terrible, unmarked reefs which have sent so many stout vessels to the bottom.

"In that case there is no danger in your going below, Mr. Allardyce," said I. "See what you can make of her, and find out how much of her cargo may be saved. I'll look through these papers while you are gone."

The bills of lading, and some notes and letters which lay upon the desk sufficed to inform me that the Brazilian brig *Nossa Senhora da Victoria* had cleared from Bahia a month before. The name of the captain was Texeira, but there was no record as to the number of the crew. She was bound for London, and a glance at the bills of lading was sufficient to show me that we were not likely to profit much in the way of salvage. Her cargo consisted of nuts, ginger, and wood, the latter in the shape of great logs of valuable tropical growths. It was these, no doubt, which had prevented the ill-fated vessel from going to the bottom, but they were of such a size as to make it impossible for us to extract them. Besides these, there were a few fancy goods, such as a number of ornamental birds for millinery purposes, and a hundred cases of preserved fruits. And then, as I turned over the papers, I came upon a short note in English, which arrested my attention.

"It is requested," said the note, "that the various old Spanish and Indian curiosities which came out of the Santarem collection, and which are consigned to Prontfoot and Neuman, of Oxford Street, London, should be put in some place where there may be no danger of these very valuable and unique articles being injured or tampered with. This applies most particularly to the treasure chest of Don Ramirez di Leyra, which must on no account be placed where anyone can get at it."

The treasure chest of Don Ramirez! Unique and valuable articles! Here was a chance of salvage after all! I had risen to my feet with the paper in my hand, when my Scotch mate appeared in the doorway.

"I'm thinking all isn't quite as it should be aboard of this ship, sir," said he. He was a hard-faced man, and yet I could see that he had been startled.

"What's the matter?"

"Murder's the matter, sir. There's a man here with his brains beaten out."

"Killed in the storm?" said I.

"May be so, sir. But I'll be surprised if you think so after you have seen him."

"Where is he then?"

"This way, sir; here in the maindeck house."

There appeared to have been no accommodation below in the brig, for there was the after-house for the captain, another by the

He lay as far as it was possible from the box.

main hatchway with the cook's galley attached to it, and a third in the forecastle for the men. It was to this middle one that the mate led me. As you entered the galley, with its litter of tumbled pots and dishes, was upon the right, and upon the left was a small room with two bunks for the officers. Then beyond there was a place about twelve feet square, which was littered with flags and spare canvas All round the walls were a number of packets done up in coarse cloth and carefully lashed to the woodwork. At the other end was a great box, striped red and white, though the red was so faded and the white so dirty that it was only where the light fell directly upon it that one could see the colouring. The box was, by subsequent measurement, four feet three inches in length, three feet two inches in height, and three feet across—considerably larger than a seaman's chest.

But it was not to the box that my eyes or my thoughts were turned as I entered the store-room. On the floor, lying across the litter of hunting, there was stretched a small, dark man with a short curling beard. He lay as far as it was possible from the box, with his feet towards it and his head away. A crimson patch was printed upon the white canvas on which his head was resting, and little red ribbons wreathed themselves round his swarthy neck and trailed away on to the floor, but there was no sign of a wound that I could see, and his face was as placid as that of a sleeping child

It was only when I stooped that I could perceive his injury, and then I turned away with an exclamation of horror. He had been poleaxed, apparently by some person standing behind him. A frightful blow had smashed in the top of his head and penetrated deeply into his brain. His face might well be placid for death must have been absolutely instantaneous, and the position of the wound showed that he could never have seen the person who had inflicted it.

"Is that foul play or accident, Captain Barclay?" asked my second mate demurely.

"You are quite right, Mr. Allardyce. The man has been murdered, struck down from above by a sharp and heavy weapon. But who was he, and why did they murder him?"

"He was a common seaman, sir," said the

mate. "You can see that if you look at his fingers." He turned out his pockets as he spoke and brought to light a pack of cards, some tarred string, and a bundle of Brazilian tobacco.

"Hullo, look at this!" said he.

It was a large, open knife with a stiff spring blade which he had picked up from the floor. The steel was shining and bright, so that we could not associate it with the crime, and yet the dead man had apparently held it in his hand when he was struck down, for it still lay within his grasp.

"It looks to me, sir, as if he knew he was in danger, and kept his knife handy," said the mate. "However, we can't help the poor beggar now. I can't make these things out that are lashed to the wall. They seem to be idols and weapons and curios of all sorts done up in old sacking."

"That's right," said I. "They are the only things of value that we are likely to get from the cargo. Hail the barque and tell them to send the other quarter-boat to help us to get the stuff aboard."

While he was away I examined this curious plunder which had come into our possession. The curiosities were so wrapped up that I could only form a general idea as to their nature, but the striped box stood in a good light where I could thoroughly examine it. On the lid, which was clamped and cornered with metal work, there was engraved a complex coat of arms, and beneath it was a line of Spanish which I was able to decipher as meaning: "The treasure chest of Don Ramirez di Leyra, Knight of the Order of Saint James, Governor and Captain-General of Terra Firma and of the Province of Veraquas." In one corner was the date 1606, and on the other a large white label, upon which was written in English: "Yon are earnestly requested, upon no account, to open this box." The same warning was repeated underneath in Spanish. As to the lock, it was a very complex and heavy one of engraved steel, with a Latin motto, which was above a seaman's comprehension.

By the time I had finished this examination of the peculiar box, the other quarter-boat with Mr. Armstrong, the first officer, had come alongside, and we began to carry out

Allardyce and I, with the carpenter and one seaman, shifted the striped box.

and place in her the various curiosities which appeared to be the only objects worth moving from the derelict ship. When she was full I sent her back to the barque, and then Allardyce and I, with the carpenter and one seaman, shifted the striped box, which was the only thing left, to our boat, and lowered it over, balancing it upon the two middle thwarts, for it was so heavy that it would have given the boat a dangerous tilt had we placed it at either end. As to the dead man, we left him where we had found him.

The mate had a theory that at the moment of the desertion of the ship, this fellow had started plundering, and that the captain in an attempt to preserve discipline, had struck him down with a hatchet or some other heavy weapon. It seemed more probable than any other explanation, and yet it did not entirely satisfy me either. But the ocean is full of mysteries, and we were content to leave the fate of the dead seaman of the Brazilian brig to be added to that long list which every sailor can recall.

The heavy box was slung up by ropes on to the deck of the *Mary Sinclair*, and was carried by four seamen into the cabin, where, between the table and the after-lockers, there was just space for it to stand. There it remained during supper, and after that meal the mates remained with me, and discussed over a glass of grog the event of the day. Mr. Armstrong was a long, thin, vulture-like man, an excellent seaman, but famous for his nearness and cupidity. Our treasure trove had excited him greatly, and already he had begun with glistening eyes to reckon up how much it might be worth to each of us when the shares of the salvage came to be divided.

"If the paper said that they were unique, Mr. Barclay, then they may be worth anything that you like to name. You wouldn't believe the sums that the rich collectors give. A thousand pounds is nothing to them. We'll have something to show for our voyage, or I am mistaken."

"I don't think that," said I. "As far as I can see they are not very different from any other South American curios."

"Well, sir, I've traded there for fourteen voyages, and I have never seen anything like that chest before. That's worth a pile of money, just as it stands. But it's so heavy, that surely there must be something valuable inside it. Don't you think that we ought to open it and see?"

"If you break it open you will spoil it, as likely as not," said the second mate.

Armstrong squatted down in front of it, with his head on one side, and his long, thin nose within a few inches of the lock.

"The wood is oak,' said he, "and it has shrunk a little with age. If I had a chisel or a strong bladed knife I could force the lock back without doing any damage at all."

The mention of a strong bladed knife made me think of the dead seaman upon the brig.

"I wonder if he could have been on the job when someone came to interfere with him," said I.

"I don't know about that, sir, but I am perfectly certain that I could open the box. There's a screwdriver here in the locker. Just hold the lamp, Allardyce, and I'll have it done in a brace of shakes."

"Wait a bit," said I, for already with eyes which gleamed with curiosity and with avarice, he was stooping over the lid. "I don't see that there is any hurry over this matter. You've read that card which warns us not to open it. It may mean anything or it may mean nothing, but somehow I feel inclined to obey it. After all, whatever is in it will keep, and if it is valuable it will be worth as much if it is opened in the owner's offices as in the cabin of the *Mary Sinclair*."

The first officer seemed bitterly disappointed at my decision.

"Surely, sir, you are not superstitious about it," said he, with a slight sneer upon his thin lips. "If it gets out of our own hands, and we don't see for ourselves what is inside it we may be done out of our rights; besides—"

"That's enough, Mr. Armstrong," said I abruptly. "You may have every confidence that you will get your rights, but I will not have that box opened to-night."

"Why the label itself shows that the box has been examined by Europeans," Allardyce added. "Because a box is a treasure-box is no reason that it has treasures inside it now."

A good many folk have had a peep into it since the days of the old Governor of Terra Firma."

Armstrong threw the screwdriver down upon the table and shrugged his shoulders.

"Just as you like," said he, but for the rest of the evening, although we spoke upon many subjects, I noticed that his eyes were continually coming round with the same expression of curiosity and greed to the old striped box.

And now I come to that portion of my story which fills me even now with a shuddering horror when I think of it. The main cabin had the rooms of the officers round it, but mine was the farthest away from it at the end of the little passage which led to the companion. No regular watch was kept by me, except in cases of emergency, and the three mates divided the watches among them. Armstrong had the middle watch which ends at four in the morning, and he was relieved by Allardyce. For my part I have always been one of the soundest of sleepers, and it is rare for anything less than a hand upon my shoulder to arouse me.

For a few moments I stood gasping.

And yet I was aroused that night, or rather in the early grey of the morning. It was just half-past four by my chronometer when something caused me to sit up in my berth wide-awake and with every nerve tingling. It was a sound of some sort, a crash with a human cry at the end of it, which still jarred upon my ears. I sat listening, but all was now silent. And yet it could not have been imagination, that hideous cry, for the echo of it still rang in my head, and it seemed to have come from some place quite close to me. I sprang from my bunk, and pulling on some clothes, I made my way into the cabin.

At first I saw nothing unusual there. In the cold, grey light I made out the red-clothed table, the six rotating chairs, the walnut lockers, the swinging barometer, and there at the end, the big striped chest. I was turning away with the intention of going upon deck and asking the second mate if he had heard anything, when my eyes fell suddenly upon something which projected from under the table. It was the leg of a man—a leg with a long sea-boot upon it. I stooped, and there was a figure sprawling upon his face, his arms thrown forward and his body twisted. One glance told me that it was Armstrong, the first officer, and a second that he was a dead man. For a few moments I stood gasping. Then I rushed on to the deck, called Allardyce to my assistance, and came back with him into the cabin.

Together we pulled the unfortunate fellow from under the table, and as we looked at his dripping head we exchanged glances, and I do not know which was the paler of the two.

"The same as the Spanish sailor," said I.

"The very same. God preserve us! It's that infernal chest! Look at Armstrong's hand!"

He held up the mate's right hand, and there was the screwdriver which he had wished to use the night before.

"He's been at the chest, sir. He knew that I was on deck and you asleep. He knelt down in front of it and he pushed the lock back with that tool. Then something happened to him, and he cried out so that you heard him."

"Allardyce," I whispered, "what *could* have happened to him?"

The second mate put his hand upon my sleeve and drew me into his cabin.

"We can talk here, sir, and we don't know who may be listening to us in there. What do you suppose is in that box, Captain Barclay?"

"I give you my word, Allardyce, that I have no idea."

"Well, I can only find one theory which will fit all the facts. Look at the size of the box. Look at all the carving and metal work which may conceal any number of holes. Look at the weight of it. It took four men to carry it. On the top of that, remember that two men have tried to open it, and both have come to their end through it. Now, sir, what can it mean except one thing?"

"You mean there is a man in it?"

"Of course there is a man in it. You know how it is in these South American States, sir. A man may be President one week and hunted like a dog the next. They are for ever flying for their lives. My idea is that there is some fellow in hiding there, who is armed and desperate, and who will fight to the death before he is taken."

"But his food and drink?"

"It's a roomy chest, sir, and he may have some provisions stowed away. As to his drink, he had a friend among the crew upon the brig who saw that he had what he needed."

"You think, then, that the label asking people not to open the box was simply written in his interest"

"Yes, sir, that is my idea. Have you any other way of explaining the facts?"

I had to confess that I had not

"The question is what are we to do?" I asked.

"The man's a dangerous ruffian who sticks at nothing. I'm thinking it wouldn't be a bad thing to put a rope round the chest and tow it alongside for half-an-hour. Then we could open it at our ease. Or if we just tied the box up and kept him from getting any water maybe that would do as well. Or the carpenter could put a coat of varnish over it and stop all the blow-holes"

"Come, Allardyce," said I angrily. "You don't seriously mean to say that a whole ship's company are going to be terrorised by a single man in a box. If he's there, I'll engage to fetch him out!" I went to my room and came back with my revolver in my hand. "Now, Allardyce," said I. "Do you open the lock and I'll stand on guard."

"For God's sake, think what you are doing, sir," cried the mate. "Two men have lost their lives over it, and the blood of one not yet dry upon the carpet"

"The more reason why we should revenge him."

"Well, sir, at least let me call the carpenter. Three are better than two, and he is a good stout man."

He went off in search of him and I was left alone with the striped chest in the cabin. I don't think that I'm a nervous man, but I kept the table between me and this solid old relic of the Spanish Main. In the growing light of morning the red and white striping was beginning to appear, and the curious scrolls and wreaths of metal and carving which showed the loving pains which cunning craftsmen had expended upon it. Presently the carpenter and the mate came back together, the former with a hammer in his hand

"It's a bad business, this, sir," said he, shaking his head, as he looked at the body of the mate. "And you think there's someone hiding in the box?"

"There's no doubt about it," said Allardyce, picking up the screwdriver and setting his jaw like a man who needs to brace his courage. "I'll drive the lock back if you will both stand by. If he rises let him have it on the head with your hammer, carpenter! Shoot at once, sir, if he raises his hand. Now!"

He had knelt down in front of the striped chest, and passed the blade of the tool under the lid. With a sharp snick the lock flew back. "Stand by!" yelled the mate, and with a heave he threw open the massive top

of the box. As it swung up, we all three sprang back, I with my pistol levelled, and the carpenter with the hammer above his head. Then, as nothing happened, we each took a step forward and peeped in. The box was empty.

Not quite empty either, for in one corner was lying an old yellow candlestick, elaborately engraved, which appeared to be as old as the box itself. Its rich yellow tone and artistic shape suggested that it was an object of value. For the rest there was nothing more weighty or valuable than dust in the old striped treasure chest.

"Well, I'm blessed!" cried Allardyce, staring blankly into it. "Where does the weight come in, then?"

"Look at the thickness of the sides and look at the lid. Why, it's five inches through. And see that great metal spring across it."

"That's for holding the lid up," said the mate. "You see it won't lean back. What's that German printing on the inside?"

"It means that it was made by Johann Rothstein of Augsburg, in 1606."

"And a solid bit of work, too. But it doesn't throw much light on what has passed, does it, Captain Barclay? That candlestick looks like gold. We shall have something for our trouble after all."

A row of polished steel fangs shot out.

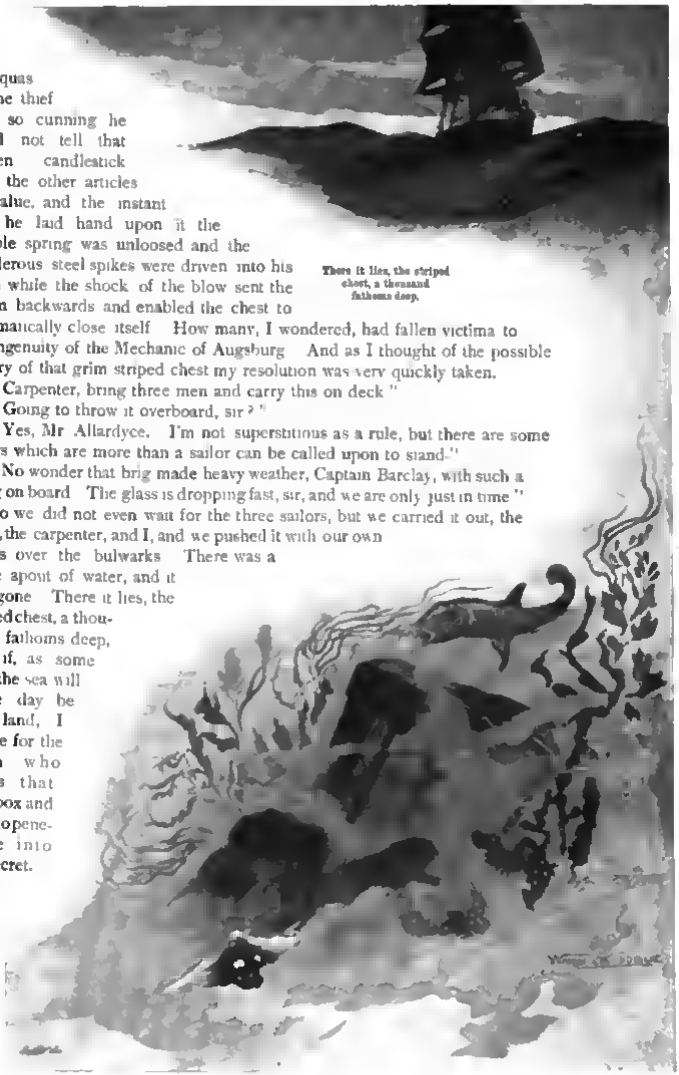
He leant forward to grasp it, and from that moment I have never doubted as to the reality of inspiration, for on the instant I caught him by the collar and pulled him straight again. It may have been some story of the Middle Ages which had come back to my mind, or it may have been that my eye had caught some red which was not that of rust upon the upper part of the lock, but to him and to me it will always seem an inspiration, so prompt and sudden was my action.

"There's devilry here," said I. "Give me the crooked stick from the corner."

It was an ordinary walking cane with a hooked top. I passed it over the candlestick and gave it a pull. With a flash a row of polished steel fangs shot out from below the upper lip, and the great striped chest snapped at us like a wild animal. Clang came the huge lid into its place, and the glasses on the swinging rack sang and tinkled with the shock. The mate sat down on the edge of the table and shivered like a frightened horse.

"You've saved my life, Captain Barclay!" said he.

So this was the secret of the striped treasure chest of old Don Ramirez di Leyra, and this was how he preserved his ill-gotten gains from the Terra Firma and the Province of



There it lies, the striped chest, a thousand fathoms deep.

Veraquas Be the thief ever so cunning he could not tell that golden candlestick from the other articles of value, and the instant that he laid hand upon it the terrible spring was unloosed and the murderous steel spikes were driven into his brain while the shock of the blow sent the victim backwards and enabled the chest to automatically close itself How many, I wondered, had fallen victima to the ingenuity of the Mechanic of Augsburg And as I thought of the possible history of that grim striped chest my resolution was very quickly taken.

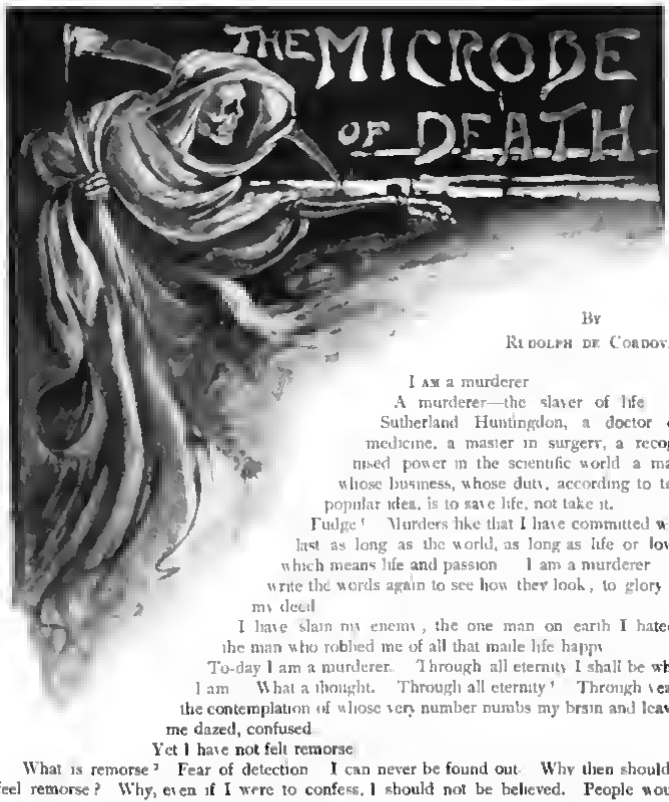
"Carpenter, bring three men and carry this on deck"

"Going to throw it overboard, sir?"

"Yes, Mr Allardyce. I'm not superstitious as a rule, but there are some things which are more than a sailor can be called upon to stand."

"No wonder that brig made heavy weather, Captain Barclay, with such a thing on board The glass is dropping fast, sir, and we are only just in time"

So we did not even wait for the three sailors, but we carried it out, the mate, the carpenter, and I, and we pushed it with our own hands over the bulwarks There was a white spout of water, and it was gone There it lies, the striped chest, a thousand fathoms deep, and if, as some say, the sea will some day be dry land, I grieve for the man who finds that old box and tries to penetrate into its secret.



By
Rudolph de Cordova.

I am a murderer.

A murderer—the slayer of life. I, Sutherland Huntingdon, a doctor of medicine, a master in surgery, a recognised power in the scientific world, a man whose business, whose duty, according to the popular idea, is to save life, not take it.

Fudge! Murders like that I have committed will last as long as the world, as long as life or love, which means life and passion. I am a murderer. I write the words again to see how they look, to glory in my deed.

I have slain my enemy, the one man on earth I hated, the man who robbed me of all that made life happy.

To-day I am a murderer. Through all eternity I shall be what I am. What a thought. Through all eternity! Through years the contemplation of whose very number numbs my brain and leaves me dazed, confused.

Yet I have not felt remorse.

What is remorse? Fear of detection. I can never be found out. Why then should I feel remorse? Why, even if I were to confess, I should not be believed. People would only declare I had gone out of my mind. I should be locked up as a lunatic.

What a sensation for an hour; what a headline for a newspaper: "A famous doctor gone mad!" But I shall not confess.

And yet I killed Harrison Everard.

I, Sutherland Huntingdon, his friend—to use the glib word that so often masks an enemy—I killed Harrison Everard, whose short obituary is before me as I write:

HARRISON EVERARD, M.D., M.S., Dean.

"Doctor Harrison Everard, whose death we regret to record, was one of the most original and brilliant of London's younger physicians.

"Yesterday he was in the enjoyment of his usual excellent health and engaged in the active pursuit of his profession, in which he would undoubtedly have been a shining light had he been spared.

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"His death was due to cerebro-spinal meningitis, but no one knows the origin of the disease. He had been performing a *post-mortem* examination early in the afternoon with his friend Doctor Sutherland Huntingdon, and at its conclusion the two gentlemen started to walk home, but, being overtaken by the thunderstorm, they parted to ride home in different cabs, after agreeing to meet to-day to discuss the notes on the case, as Doctor Everard himself had an engagement for the evening.

"So much for the mutability of human plans. Long before the hour appointed for the interview Doctor Everard was lying cold and stiff in death.

"Early in the evening he complained of headache, and his temperature began to rise. He told his wife he thought he must have contracted a cold in the storm, and asked her to give him some quinine. This produced no effect, for in a little while his head was worse and his temperature higher, so he went to bed. An hour later he became delirious, and Mrs. Everard, being alarmed, sent for a physician, who applied the usual remedies.

"Then Doctor Sutherland Huntingdon was summoned in consultation. He diagnosed acute spinal meningitis, and, though he tried to encourage Mrs. Everard, it was plain from the first he did not anticipate a favourable termination of the disease.

"All that human skill could do and science could suggest was tried without avail, and, after suffering terrible agony, the unfortunate young man died at about nine o'clock this morning.

"Doctor Everard, who had been married only a couple of years, leaves no children. His widow is prostrate with grief."

Who, reading that notice, could ever suspect for a moment his death was planned by me; executed, too, by me? Who could suggest its reason was revenge? Yet so it was.

My friendship was a mask of hatred stronger than death, for it still survives. I hate him now as I hated him when first I saw him.

Presentiments are out of fashion nowadays. They exist only in women's novels, people think. Even I laughed at the idea before I felt it. "Presentiments, bosh! Why should impending evil reveal itself to us in emotion?"

I ask the question as credulously now as incredulously then. I can offer no answer that will satisfy the inquiring mind. I merely state a fact when I say I felt the presentiment that this man meant the ruin of my happiness when I first saw Harrison Everard over three years ago.

Let me go back to the events which preceded that day.

I had been spending a few weeks in America, the happiest weeks that had ever linked themselves in my life, for just before my departure Agatha Brodair had promised to be my wife. She had planned the trip some months before, and when she accepted me I naturally made my arrangements to accompany her and her mother.

A physician with a good bank account may indulge in the luxury of a holiday.

Her father had died many years before, and, although her mother became thereby her natural guardian, she did not submit to much interference from that quarter, and generally managed her own affairs herself.

I cannot write of the time we spent abroad. No words of mine could ever paint the joy of those days, when she seemed wrapt in me and I was wrapt in her.

Those who have really loved will know the ecstasy of that communion when her wish was my command, her smile a guerdon far beyond the greatest honour a king could give.

The memory of those days will last with me until death in mingled bitter-sweet, but never a word will I speak of them, for only at rare intervals do I dare lift up the curtain of recollection and gaze upon the ashes of what was my greatest treasure.

Our holiday was drawing to an end, when I was asked to take charge of a gentleman who had been ill, and was returning to England on the *Umbria*, on which our passage was booked. The fee offered was large. I accepted, for he would not require much attention.

Our steamer was to sail on the afternoon of Saturday, but late on Friday night my patient had a relapse. It was impossible for him to start the next day, or for me to leave him.

Our eyes met.

I talked the situation over with Agatha and her mother, and tried to get them to delay their departure, but certain urgent affairs demanded their presence in London, and to my inexpressible regret they were reluctantly compelled to decide to go that afternoon.

I got a friend to watch my patient while I went to see them settled on the steamer.

After depositing their handbags and wraps, etc., in their cabin, we went to the saloon to talk for a few minutes before the bell rang for visitors to go on shore. As we reached the foot of the staircase leading from the deck a man stepped down; there was a pause as he and we stopped, each to allow the other to pass. Our eyes met, and in that instant, without any reason at all, I felt a sharp sting, it could hardly be called a pain, dart through my heart, which seemed to stop, and a dread, a nameless horror, came over me. I almost shuddered and my flesh crept all over. I could not understand it.

We passed on, and in talking I remarked how signally his presence had affected me, and how strangely I disliked this unknown man.

Presently the bell rang. The time had come for us to part, but it would only be for a few days we felt, and we consoled ourselves with the thought of the joy our meeting would bring.

That afternoon a telegram came from Sandy Hook, and on Monday such a letter as I naturally expected from the woman I should soon call my wife.

On Wednesday my patient died, and after duly notifying his relations I made my arrangements and left on Saturday for England.

We had a fine passage, and early on the following Sunday week we were landed. There was a great crowd on board, and, eager to see the girl I had parted from two weeks before, I chafed at the delay in getting the luggage through the Custom House and in loading up the train. Eventually, however, we reached London, and I dashed off to my hotel, where I expected a letter telling me where I should find her and her mother, for they had given up their flat before leaving, and were not sure where they would stop.

I found the eagerly looked for letter, and went to my room to gloat over its contents alone. I opened it, and I remember how I turned hot and cold as I read.

My God! how can a woman be as false as that.

She swore she loved me when we had parted at New York; she told me of her deep and undying affection; she repeated it in her letter from Sandy Hook.

And in the one I held that day—the day I expected to bring me nothing but joy—she merely said she had something serious to tell me, and asked me to call that evening.

What could that something be? Again I had that dreadful sinking at my heart, that sinister foreboding of disaster.

The time wore on slowly enough, but at last the hour she had named came and I went to her.

What a story for an ardent lover to hear.

Briefly this:—She loved me no more, or rather she had found, after months of constant intercourse, she had never loved me. She loved another "with all her soul"; that other Dr. Harrison Everard. He was the man whose presence had filled me with a nameless horror; with a presentiment of evil when I saw him at the foot of the stairs of the *Cimbria's* saloon.

She had discovered all this love during the week they were at sea. He was "her affinity"—also discovered during that week; "the being ordained to make her life complete"—discovered during that week.

All that night I paced up and down my room. I looked out of my window at the night. Black! All nature seemed attuned in sympathy with me.

I threw myself upon the bed, and for the first, the only time in my life, I sobbed aloud.

When next I looked out a glow was in the east. It was the strangest lighting of the day I ever saw—against the gloom a blood red streak.

In a moment flashed into my brain the wild thought which has at length been realised: "Blood—his blood; his life for my soul."

In that moment, too, with that thought of murder came a fearful revulsion of feeling, a change as unaccountable as strong.

I hated her as I hated him.

In that moment the woman for whom, immediately before, I would willingly—nay, with joy—have gone to death and damnation, took on another shape, from angel she was transformed to fiend, a fiend gnawing at my heart, seeking to tear out my soul, and succeeding, too, in her fiendish desire.

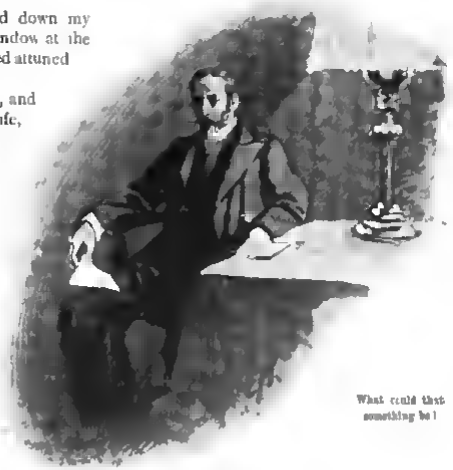
Which was most to blame?

Harrison Everard, who had stolen her love from me, or she, who, though she had sworn to be loyal to me, had broken her oath and been faithless to the bond which united us, to the love of me which she had declared had beautified her life?

Not on him alone my vengeance should be wreaked, but on her—even more on her. On him a short, a sudden punishment—death which must come to all sooner or later.

On her its consequences, the bitterness of disappointment, the blasting of her life, the numbing of sensibilities awakened by a love such as she had declared she bore to him, as she had before sworn she bore to me.

The pain of living on in loneliness—to which she had condemned me—should be hers, too.



What could that something be?

And through the bitterness of vengeance, somehow, welled up love.

Love and hate—intense, the one as the other—struggled in my soul, and through them grew the thought—"But not death, now; wait—wait until they have been married for awhile, and she has learned to lean on him. So will the sting be sharper, deeper, longer-lived."

But how to accomplish my purpose without discovery?

And with the question came the answer—"Her request." "Be our friend," she had said.

So be it. She had furnished me the opportunity; the means could wait, for no vulgar murder should stain my hands, no condemned cell be my halting-place, no gallows be my lot.

Respected by the world, I should live my natural length of days, regretted, a benefactor of my kind, I should die, and my memory be heaped with honours.

Poor, credulous, foolish world!

I looked out again at the sky; the blood red streak had spread, and through it shot a shaft of bright white light, a sign, it seemed to me, of the double punishment, the double vengeance I should take, and a promise of the achievement of my purpose.

I went that day, and was introduced to Harrison Everard, whom I congratulated on his happiness.

We met frequently—always a bitter pain to me, but I never showed him what I felt.

I took them out to suppers and the theatres. We were "friends."

For months I suffered beyond description. I scarcely ate, I scarcely slept, or else sank into a dull, heavy stupor, from which I awoke unrefreshed in body or brain, for I dreamed always; dreamed awake as well as asleep. If I attempted to read I did so mechanically; my eyes passed over the pages line by line, but not an idea was registered on my mind; if I talked, my thoughts wandered away, and I would give the most haphazard answers, if I ventured to reply at all. Nothing interested me.

A black pall, as it were, hung over my life, and its gloom oppressed me.

I thought of seeking relief in suicide. In the grave, I knew—at least, I thought I knew—peace is to be found.

But why should I cut short my career, dash from my lips the brimming cup when I had only just begun to quaff the elixir of success with which it was filled, for which I thirsted? No. I must drink deep of that before I shall be satisfied.

Beside, when he is dead, I said to myself, may she not, after a time, come back to me, and may I not know something of the happiness he will taste?

Oh! fatally weak love—hatred. How like a weathercock it makes a man!

Could I really dream of such a possible unravelling of this tangled web?

Would I even take her then if she would consent? Who knows? Even I would not hazard an opinion, although I hated her then as deeply as I loved her before.

Time alone can tell,—time that bound them closer still.

* * * * *

When they were to be married I arranged to be called out of town to see a patient.

Men will get ill at inopportune moments. Physicians must be summoned. What physician but will give up an entertainment, a pleasure at the call of duty?

I would not go to their wedding. That would have been more than I could bear.

Of course I sent a present—an elaborate one.

When they had been married some time I grew calmer. Even the sting of great grief does not last for ever, and we can look without much pain on the wound which ached so sorely before.

As I became more composed I began to rouse myself to the thought of vengeance. As a cobra coils himself and sleeps, but when aroused the head rises from the mass, poises itself for a moment, there is a sudden, lightning-like movement; a puncture, and in a few minutes comes coma—death so I.

I was a cobra. A subtle poison, ill understood, but powerful beyond anything found in nature; a poison allied, perhaps, to some arrow-head venom used by barbaric Africans was to be my weapon.

For years I had been engaged in the study of bacteriology, in which science all the world knows I have won a reputation, a place among the famous men.

I have a laboratory stocked with all the apparatus required for research in this field, where I cultivate germs of all sorts and examine them under the microscope.

One day while examining a solution containing germs derived from a sheep that had died of anthrax—splenic fever, as it is commonly called—the idea came towards the carrying out of which I bent all my energy, directed every thought.

The anthrax bacillus is undoubtedly one of the most potent in its effect—perhaps that is the reason why it is so common in every laboratory; it is a standard article and can be kept dried for months and years, as potent to revive as if used fresh. Yes. Scratch a needle upon the medium upon which it has been kept — a piece of gelatin — stick that needle into a guinea-pig — the animal specially designed by nature for the scientist's slaughter — or inject a drop or two of a solution containing anthrax germs, and the disease breaks forth with undiminished virulence, and in a few hours the animal is dead.

I watched them with loving interest.

I made the experiment dozens of times, always with success from my point of view. Science is selfish in its contemplation. It looks only on one side of the picture, it hears only one side of the argument; we shut our ears and eyes to the guinea-pig's objections.

In time I came across a sheep suffering with the disease in the most virulent form I had ever seen it.

It seemed as if fate were working for me—with me.

I took a few drops of the blood, mixed them with solutions of gelatin in test-tubes, and allowed them to develop under the most favourable conditions.

I watched them with loving interest as the feathery thread spread onwards in the mass and formed a filmy scum upon its surface.

A little solid jelly in a tube, a whitish substance on the top. No more. It looked so insignificant.

Yet death lurked within a scrap of that insignificant-looking scum — not death whose gentle fingers soothe and caress the weary, spirit-broken frame until the worn-out child of earth sinks on her ample breast and finds sleep and rest — peaceful, long hoped for, too long delayed — not death whose clarion call rings loud above the battle's thunder, stirring the blood, stimulating the heart, until man rushes on, proud, defiant, with head erect, impetuous, eager to meet the grizzly foe, and from the bony hands receive a crown of glory as he falls—but death with swift hurrying footsteps, death remorseless, agonising, grim, who terrifies the watchers with a numbing sense of impotence, of impossibility of escape from his all-conquering presence, even though he delays upon the road to shoot an arrow now on this side, now on that.

And yet men boast of all their power. What is their vaunting worth when something infinitesimally small, indiscernible as a distinct object, except with powerful glasses, can lay that power in the dust?

I dried some of the blood itself on micro-

scope slides, and put them away carefully, as a sort of reserve fund in case of need.

The time was approaching.

From one of the tubes I removed a minute quantity of the developed virus, and injected it into a rabbit.

Of course the animal died; more rapidly, too, than any of the others on which I had before experimented.

I took a needle and rubbed the point upon the gelatin, then I stuck it into another rabbit's ear.

It died even more quickly than in the former case.

One day I started for a walk, and took with me a piece of the gelatin, on which grew a whole colony of anthrax germs from the direct cultivation of that blood drop. The gelatin I put into a carefully closed little box to preserve its precious inhabitants from harm.

I was walking with an army in my waistcoat pocket, an army powerful for action as any furnished with the deadly weapons of to-day, as numerous, perhaps, as the combined soldiers of any country.

I was going to make an experiment on a larger scale than ever before at another man's expense—whose I neither knew nor cared.

Passing by a shop, I noticed a fine, large, strong horse standing in a cart in front of the door.

Crowds were hurrying on; men and women jostling, elbowing their way along, intent on their business, some resenting the passage of the few, moving more rapidly in their endeavour to force a pathway through the closed ranks; most following in the slow, steady stream, gazing at the wares exhibited in the windows.

Where could a better opportunity occur? where is one less observed than in a crowd?

In an instant came the thought "Try your needle prick on one of these; make your experiment on a human subject and be sure of the effect."

This thought, which sprang full-armed from my brain like Minerva—for I had already drawn the needle over the scrap of gelatin—I killed in its birth.

What had any of the crowd done to me that I should bring sorrow in their families?

—In that moment I held in my hand a god-like power, the power to destroy—a power as potent as the thunderbolt of the heathen Jove himself forged by misshapen Vulcan, and yet so slight. A little needle, a tiny bar of polished steel devised for the most inoffensive use, yet in my hands remorseless as fate itself in dealing out swift death.

No, no, the crowd was safe from me. My vengeance was directed against one house, not against mankind at large.

I am a man, no fiend.

Then I looked again at that strong horse.

I got in the way of a man; he pushed me on one side. I pretended to slip, and as I did so I stuck the needle into the horse's lip. He tossed his head up at the sudden prick, but did not attempt to move, so slight was the pain. I had passed a strong piece of silk through the needle's eye to remove it quickly, but I need not have feared it would be imbedded in the poor brute's lip, for I scarcely touched the mucous membrane.

I knew where the horses belonging to that business were stabled, and next afternoon I passed the place. I went in, and, as if I were a newspaper reporter, made some inquiries as to the number kept, the amount of work they did, etc., and remarked casually that I had noticed two or three very fine animals in the firm's vans the day before. The man to whom I was talking told me that one of the best had just died with most curious symptoms which they could not understand, and after only a few hours' illness.

Presently they dragged the carcase out. It was the creature I had inoculated. The trap was made; the bait prepared. All that remained was to set it.

When? I must await my opportunity.

* * * * *

Ever since I had determined on my scheme of vengeance I had omitted no opportunity of associating Harrison Everard with my work.

Did I need a consultation? I sent for him.

Was it necessary to perform a *post-mortem*? I got him to help me, either letting him use the knife while I made notes, or I used the knife while he wrote.

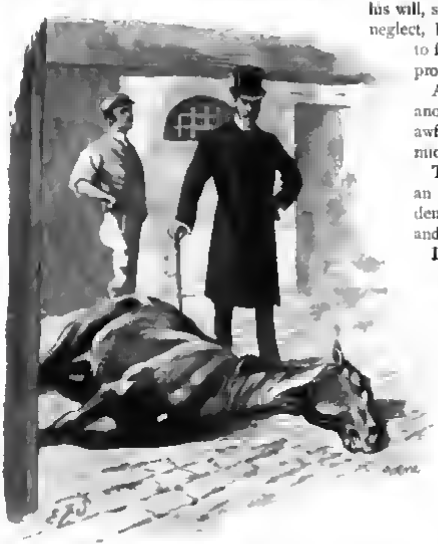
"The medical twins" we might have been called. It was even rumoured we should soon enter into partnership.

Whatever, then, might happen, no one would dream of looking at me as the author of his death.

But who would imagine that his death was other than an accident?

The time was ripe. The opportunity was at hand.

Agatha and he had been married over two years by this time, and though he and I met often professionally, I had not been to their house more than a few times. I was invited,



It was the creature I had inoculated.

but I could not accept hospitality from her. I pleaded work, and the experiments I was making for the book I had already begun. All doctors write books nowadays.

Ten days ago I was sent for to attend a patient. He was dangerously ill. I summoned Harrison—we called each other by our Christian names—to a consultation.

We agreed to watch the case together and meet daily, for the disease was obscure and complicated. Constant vigilance was necessary if the patient were, by any possibility, to be saved, which even then seemed doubtful.

We went each day to his bedside, and one or the other would remain and watch him for a while after our chat.

He was a curious man, alone in the world, the last of his family, and he requested that if he died during this illness we would perform an autopsy to learn exactly what had been the trouble, and then have his body cremated. All this, he informed us, he had desired in his will, so there should be no possibility of neglect, but still he begged us to be sure to follow out his wishes. Of course we promised.

After a week his symptoms took another turn, and he began to suffer awful pain. We gave him hypodermics of morphine.

Three nights ago I was aroused by an urgent message that he had suddenly developed alarming symptoms, and the nurse feared the end was near.

I went with all haste to him, but before I left I put into my pocket a tiny tube, containing a solution in pure sterilised water of the same generation of the anthrax blood drops I had used in my previous experiments — experiments which had resulted so famously.

When I arrived I saw death was certain. It was three o'clock.

A black night. It was quiet too, there, high above the street. In an apartment on the seventh floor, even in the din of London, the city's roar becomes a hum, if it be heard at all. But in the dead hours of the night, when everything is hushed, except the rattle of an occasional hansom which rumbles up and down the streets with a belated roysterer returning home, all is peaceful.

There was not a sound in the apartment save the ticking of the clock on the mantel that seemed to call off the seconds left for the poor fellow on the bed, whose heavy breathing was the only other sound that broke the silence.

I stuck the needle into the blood vessel

I watched the dying man, who was now unconscious.

Five o'clock boomed from a neighbouring church, and I roused myself with a start from the half doze into which I had fallen.

The breathing was quieter, the pulse scarcely discernible; the face ashy pale; he could not live an hour more, the end might come at any time.

I took the tube from my pocket, and a hypodermic syringe.

The clock upon the mantel kept up its dull, monotonous record of the seconds as they flew.

I drew into the syringe some of the fluid with its potent germs, turned up the sleeve of this dying man's shirt, pressed on the vein just at the bend of the elbow of his left arm, and, as it swelled, I stuck the needle into the blood-vessel in the direction of the circulation and injected the contents.

He did not know what I was doing, his brain had stopped performing its functions, he was a mere machine.

Nothing that I could do would hasten his death. I used him for my purpose. He was the means to my end.

In half-an-hour he was dead.

I returned home, and as I walked along the quiet street, here and there awakening into life and activity, I looked up at the sky, and there in the east the sun was rising, undimmed by a single cloud, and in its brightness I read the promise of a day of triumph, a day in which all I wished for most on earth would happen; in which I should achieve the reward of patience and observation.

My vengeance was at hand.

As soon as I got home I wrote to Harrison and told him of our patient's death, suggesting twelve o'clock for the autopsy.

He agreed.

I went to breakfast and ate heartily. Death has no influence on a physician's appetite, or some of us would eat but little. After breakfast I bandaged up a finger and put on a glove still as if I had cut myself, for I knew he would not then let me use the knife for fear of poisoning the wound.

We met and went to work. I gave him the tools at his request, as he insisted I should take notes and run no risk of infecting that (supposed) cut.

I knew that body was swarming with anthrax bacilli as virulent as they could be. It held death for thousands of men could a needle stuck in a vein prick deep enough to draw but a single drop of blood.

And Harrison Everard had his hands in that body. A touch with only one of the knives he was using, and my vengeance would be accomplished.

But how to do it? Knock against his arm. Yes, but that would most probably make a cut, and he could blame himself or me for carelessness.

No, I would rather not do it that way if I could help it.

In looking over his shoulder I noticed that in cutting through the ribs he had left a

jagged edge on one. If I could get him to strike his hand on that!

As he was taking out the heart I saw him leave his knife in the cavity, and as he put out his hand to regain it, I turned suddenly and spoke to him; he started and struck the back of his hand against the edge of the chest cavity and a tiny spicule of bone broke off in his little finger.

I removed it for him. It did not even bleed. He took no notice of it, and went on with the operations; each moment making it more certain he would introduce hordes of bacilli into his system through that slight abrasion, such is their minute size, while their virulence in inverse ratio would make an illness, if not death, certain, though only a few entered his body.

We finished our work and prepared to leave As we did so we noticed that the sky had suddenly grown overcast. Black clouds lowered and scudded quickly before the hot, oppressive breeze.

Almost as we stepped out into the street the storm broke; there was a vivid flash of lightning, a deafening peal of thunder which had scarcely died away when another flash and another peal startled us by their intensity, and huge drops of rain began to fall. Before we reached the corner the drops had quickened into a heavy downpour and the thunder rolled incessantly.

It seemed as if the elements were at war and keeping up a perpetual cannonading in the sky.

We stepped into a doorway and waited until the storm was over, but even in the few steps we had walked our clothes were wet and our shoes soaked.

In a little while the rain ceased, and we were able to start on our homeward way; we parted at the corner after agreeing to meet next morning at eleven to talk over the case.

Next morning at eleven. This morning.

"Will he keep the appointment?" I thought, as I watched him jump lightly enough into a hansom, and I smiled grimly at the question as I stood waiting for another hansom to come up.

Then my scientific training getting the ascendancy I dropped the humour, and, looking beyond at the reality in a serious way, I asked myself which will it be—"delirium, unconsciousness, or death itself, when eleven o'clock to-morrow comes?"

"It should be death," I heard myself mutter, "if the big experiment can be relied on approximately as to time—death or 'very near it,'" and I hummed the last three words to a tune of a popular song I used to hear in the streets with that catch phrase. I laughed half aloud at the odd conceit as I jumped into a hansom which had just come round the corner.

His death—my victory—and a comic song.

Then my thoughts reverted to the storm which had passed as rapidly as it had arisen. It seemed as if the elements had, at the same moment, been saluting me with the loud salvos of artillery which greet a conqueror on his return after a brilliant victory, and firing a volley for the loss of a hero, while the mutterings of the thunder might have been the muffled drums beating over his grave.

Even the elements inspired me with the idea of the success of the vengeance I had taken.

I reached home and lunched heartily. Then I set to work. I suppose people would be surprised, incredulous, horrified, perhaps, if they knew I did not trouble myself any further about Harrison Everard. Why should I?

There was no reason for me to speculate on his fate. By all my calculations he was doomed, his death was certain. But even if he should, by some chance, escape, what matter? He knew nothing of the trap I had laid for him; he suspected nothing.

If I failed I could try again and again Patients die, even my patients *Post-mortems* must be made.

It was not the last opportunity I should have; no, not by scores.

Time was not an element to be considered Now or a little later could make no difference, so long as we both lived.

He was mine, his life mine.

The pain, the consequences of his death, hers—mine.

Why, then, should I be anxious or trouble about him?

No, I worked and was absorbed in my labours until the time came to visit my patients.

Then I went and examined them with cool head, steady hand, and quiet nerves. I never thought of him.

It is remorse—fear of detection—that makes a man's hand tremble, his knees shake, his voice quiver.

I returned home, read, went to bed and slept until they woke me at the summons from Mrs. Everard.

Then I knew that I was the victor, and I hurried to the house to see him and study his symptoms.

About eight o'clock last night, I learned when I was summoned, he complained of a headache, and his temperature began to rise. In an hour he was in a high fever and the pain had increased.

In another hour he was delirious, and Mrs. Everard sent for a physician. He blistered Harrison, and later on put on an ice cap.

Of course, the treatment was futile.

The anthrax bacilli were at work. It was a question of an hour, more or less. His strength against their power.

He died as I foretold he would when I arrived, for they sent for me early in the morning.

At nine o'clock he was dead.

There had been no local symptoms to show that septic matter had entered the circulation. Not a lymphatic was inflamed. There was not a single red line on his white arm, as is generally observed when poison enters the system in that way.

I did not mention the incident of the spicule of bone. Why should I complicate the deed with the story of its cause when there was no need?

Harrison Everard dead!

"So perish all my enemies!" I could have cried. And as I looked down upon the whitened face again, I felt the gleam of triumph come once more into my eyes.

She was prostrated by the shock, and remained in her room. I have not seen her, but I sent a message by her mother—the smooth, smug message of emptiness and less, with which people are expected to intrude into one's grief—and blamed if they omit.

I left and returned home while they were making arrangements for the funeral.

I promised to be present.

I shall see him borne in the black casket to the city, where rich and poor, happy and wretched, good and bad, the world-esteemed fiend and the world-despised demi-god sleep the long sleep.

Then I shall go back to my work, to augment the reputation I have already won by my bacteriological researches.

If the world but knew to what a use I put my knowledge!

And she! Shall I see her soon, and after a few months of mourning strive to win her love again? Or shall I look on from afar and watch her suffer still, and hate her more for all I have done to her, for all she has done to me.

Who knows?

I made her out to be a smart-looking and beautifully modelled craft.

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE "EMILY BRAND" BRIGANTINE

By Andrew Allen

I was at Nice, where I had been sent a month earlier a tardy and restless convalescent, when, on the morning of November 20th, I found among my letters at breakfast one from my old friend, Jack Drayton, dated two days earlier "On board the *Nomad*, Marseilles Harbour," and begging me to go for a cruise to the Azores with him. His fellow-voyagers, he wrote, had deserted him at Malta to go crusading to Jerusalem with some friends they had met there, and he urged me to go on this cruise with him as well on account of my health as on his account

I called on my doctor, who agreed with Drayton that the voyage would set me squarely on my feet again, and as I knew of nothing that I would like better, I decided to go I packed my trunks, took the early train for Marseilles, and boarded the yacht on the afternoon of the next day at five o'clock, and by eight the following morning we were under way.

The *Nomad* was a schooner of 230 tons, staunchly built for ocean cruising, and luxuriously equipped and furnished. Besides the captain, two mates, steward, cook, and Jack Drayton's servant, she carried a crew of seventeen men. Her owner was himself an able seaman, and his yacht was his home.

He and I were such old friends, and had lived together for so many years, that we not only were not afraid of tiring of each other, but were reasonably sure of very good company. On this occasion, however, we had a companion in Roy, a thoroughbred English mastiff that Drayton, who was very fond of animals, had taken to sea with him for the two preceding years.

I never had appreciated before this cruise how much of a companion a dog could be. Roy quite won my heart Unprejudiced by my affection for him, I think he was the noblest animal I have ever known. Stately, high-bred, intelligent, and lovable, he was "a gentleman and a scholar" from the jet of his handsome muzzle to the tip of his tawny tail.

We ran down the Mediterranean to the Straits with a fair, fast wind, feeling, as we passed the fortress, that we were well started

on our voyage. But from that time on, until the fifth of December, we loitered sadly and uneventfully, with light northerly winds. On the morning of that day, however, the breeze freshened somewhat, the smooth surface of the sea began to glitter with little ripples, our spirits rose with the prospect, and soon after nine o'clock we sighted a sail about three points off the port bow—the only thing in sight on the broad expanse of blue, shining ocean.

By noon we had approached the stranger near enough to see that she was a brigantine under short sail, and in a little while we were within hailing distance. Taking the glass, I made her out to be a smart-looking and beautifully modelled craft, and after a few minutes I read the name in gilt letters on her quarter as *Emily Brand*. Except her jib and a staysail she had not a stitch of canvas set. As I looked she impressed me with a sense of deathlike stillness, desolation, and mystery, and I could see that her wheel was loose, and that there was no one on her deck.

I handed the glass to Drayton, who, after a short survey, told Captain Parker to hail. The captain, as we neared her, called repeatedly in stentorian tones, but no answer came, and no sign of life appeared on board the strange vessel. Finally, when within three hundred yards of her, we shortened sail, had a boat lowered away, and Drayton and I, with the first mate of the *Nomad* and two seamen, rowed alongside.

Slowly drifting to leeward, she was barely moving, and Jameson, the mate, clambered aboard by the gear of the bowsprit. He threw us a line, and, making the boat fast, we quickly followed him. He and the two men went forward, while Drayton and I, crossing the deck to the companion-way, which we found open, entered the cabin. It was empty. The men forward likewise finding no one, we all five searched the vessel fore and aft, and high and low.

There was not a living being besides ourselves on board. She had evidently been deserted. But why? She was seemingly perfectly sound, and we failed to discover the least apparent cause for her abandonment. Her hold was exceptionally dry, there not being as much bilge in it as would fill a hogshead.

Her cargo consisted of casks marked as containing alcohol, all of which were stowed in good order and condition, except one, which had been started. The exterior of the hull above the water line did not exhibit the slightest trace of damage, nor was there the least evidence in the interior that the vessel had been repaired in any way or was at that time in need of any repairs. We also found that the vessel was amply provisioned and that she had plenty of good water in her casks.

Our charts showed that we had boarded the derelict in latitude 38° 20′ north, longitude 17° 15′ west. In its proper place we found her log-book, but her chronometer, and bills of lading were missing. The log showed that the last day's work of the vessel had been on the twenty-fourth of November, sea time, when the weather had allowed an observation to be taken that placed her in latitude 36° 56′ north, longitude 27° 20′ west. The entries on her slate log were, however, carried down to eight o'clock of the morning of the twenty-fifth, at which hour she had passed from west to east to the north of the island of St. Mary's (Azores), the eastern point of which then bore south-south-west, six miles distant.

The distance in longitude from the island of St Mary's to the point at which we fell in with the *Emily Brand* is 7° 54′, the corrected distance of the latitude from the position last indicated in the log is 1° 18′ north; and the brigantine had apparently held on her course for ten days after the twenty-fifth of November, the wheel being loose all the time.

But during the period from the twenty-fifth of November to the fifth of December the wind had been more or less from the north continuously, and it appeared to us impossible that the derelict could have covered within that time a distance of 7° 54′ east, at any rate on the starboard tack. The obvious inference was, therefore, that she had not been abandoned until several days after the last entry made in the log.

Drayton, who was nothing if not practical when occasion required, at once set about making his arrangements to work our prize to Gibraltar. He dispatched the mate and

the two men back to the yacht with orders to have Parker select five men from the crew, one to be in authority as sailing-master, and send them aboard the brigantine prepared to take up their quarters. Meanwhile he returned to the cabin to look over the log-book again, and some papers we had found in the captain's room, and I went forward to poke about in the seamen's quarters, which were to be occupied by the *Nomad's* men.

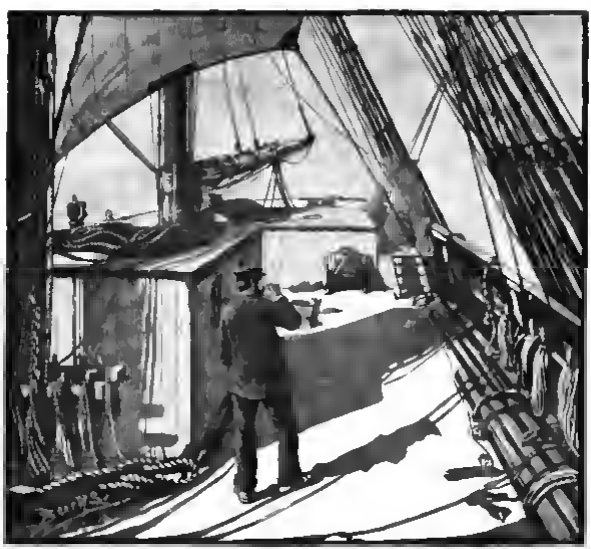
Fifteen minutes later, standing by the foremast facing aft, I struck a match to light my cigar. As I raised my eyes from doing so, I distinctly saw a man step from the rail at the port quarter, move quickly across the deck, and disappear in the companion-way. At the moment I caught but the briefest glimpse of his face and figure; but they were not to be forgotten.

He seemed to have clambered aboard from the sea, for he was dripping wet and hatless, and his light hair was matted or glued about his head and face by the water, while his clothes clung to his body and limbs, and glistened and dripped in the sunlight.

His figure was gigantic. His face and trunk were bloated or distended, like those of a man who has been drowned, and the former, without a vestige of colour, was ghastly, horrible and expressionless, even to the eyes, beyond the possibility of description.

I was naturally startled and shocked by the suddenness of his appearance and his extraordinary condition, but not so much so that I failed to shout "Hallo there!" as I got sight of him. He neither answered nor hesitated, he did not even look towards me, but, almost as I uttered the words, disappeared, as I have said, down the companion-way.

I hurried aft and entered the cabin. There alone, with his feet on a chair before him and the log-book on his knees, was Drayton, quite calm, and half facing the companion-



I distinctly saw a man step from the rail at the port quarter.

way. I looked round, saw no one else (all the state-room doors were wide open), and exclaimed in amazement: "Where is he?"

"Where is who?" drawled Drayton.

"The fellow," I replied, "who just came in here. Wake up, Jack! I saw the man enter this moment. He is here somewhere," I added, searching from room to room in vain, and trying to open a door in the forward starboard state-room, leading, as I supposed, into the between-decks space. The door was fast, and bolted on my side of it.* No one had gone through there.

I turned back to the cabin, where my companion stood gazing at me curiously. He stepped towards me, looked at me very closely, and then said sharply:

"What's the matter with you, old man, are you out of your mind? How could anyone have come in here without my seeing him?"

I described the man, and added that I could swear I had seen him enter the cabin three seconds before me.

Finally, somewhat impressed by my positiveness, Drayton, in spite of himself, went on deck, I following, and hailing the yacht, he called out: "Let the men, when the boat comes over, bring the dog with them." And then, to me: "If there is anyone on board here Roy will find him though we can't."

As we turned back to the cabin I noticed that that part of the deck over which I had seen the stranger pass, dripping with water, five minutes before, was perfectly dry, as were also the brass plates on the companion-ladder down which I had seen him disappear.

I paced the deck until the yacht's boat arrived with the men and Roy. When they had boarded the brigantine Drayton came on deck again, and we made another thorough search of her with the dog running on ahead and with the aid of two bull's-eye lanterns that the men had brought over. This second search was as fruitless of result as the first.

By the time we had finished it was after five o'clock, and we were on the point of returning to the yacht, to prepare for dinner, when we decided that it would be best to lock the cabin. We entered it for that purpose, and after having secured the doors of the state-rooms, and closed the ports, we turned to leave it, Drayton preceding me towards the deck.

Half-way up the companion-way it suddenly occurred to me that I had left my cigar-case on the table, and I returned to get it. As I again stepped into the apartment I saw, clearly defined, at the upper end of the bunk on the starboard side upon the partition, close by the state-room door, the shadow in profile of the face and figure of a man. The shadow appeared to be cast by some very tall person sitting on the bunk to my right, forward; but there was no one there, as a matter of course.

I began to doubt the evidence of my senses, and stood for a moment looking about me in bewilderment. Recovering myself, however, I approached the corner, convinced that the dark-grey shadow was a stain upon the paint. Apparently it was not.

From the chair near the harmonium I took a loose sheet of music, and, holding it between the shadow and the light, I looked behind it and perceived that that portion of the shadow—a part of the head and face—between which and the light I had interposed the obstacle had been obliterated.

On looking at the surface of the paper in my hand, I beheld the missing portion of the shadow clearly silhouetted thereon.

Having thus satisfied myself that it was a shadow, and one cast by some (to me) invisible and impalpable thing or substance, I hardly need add that I became somewhat excited. I shouted to Drayton, who immediately ran back into the cabin, followed by the dog. His examination of the phenomenon resulted exactly as mine had. On turning, at its conclusion, to speak to Roy, we found to our surprise that he had left us. Although we tried our best, neither by persuasion nor command could we prevail upon him to enter the cabin again.

* We afterwards opened this door and discovered that it led into the between-decks space, where we found amidships, adjoining the cabin, the ship's store-room, which we had entered and examined during our original search of the vessel. On either side of this store-room were arranged a number of casks of alcohol, which composed the cargo. There was nothing else to be found, and no possible corner where anyone could have been concealed. Our original entrance to this part of the brigantine had been through the main hatch, from the deck above.

I saw my companion, with his cocked revolver in hand.

We looked at each other nonplussed, Drayton and I; and I am willing to confess that, mingled with my feeling of triumph at having thus convinced him that there were others at work besides ourselves aboard the mysterious derelict, was an uncomfortable consciousness that the weird annoyance was beginning to tell on my nerves and to excite my imagination disagreeably as to what was to come next.

Still I entertained not the least doubt that we were the victims of some vulgar jugglery practised upon us for some unexplained reason by hidden human agents. I was morally positive that this was the case. I had not, of course, had time to reason with myself as to the logic of the conclusion, but it was the only natural one, and certainly no other explanation of what I had seen occurred to me. Consideration of possible supernatural causes or solutions was out of the question with both of us. Jack Drayton was as free from all superstitious fancies as he was incapable of fear, and I may claim to have been his counterpart in the former respect.

Slowly, as we looked upon it, the strange shadow faded out. After a vain search of half-an-hour, and fruitless experiments with the lights and shadows of the cabin, we locked the companion-way and returned to the yacht to dine.

By eight o'clock, having completed our arrangements, we went back to the brigantine to pass the night in her cabin. Roy received us on deck, and we tried again, but in vain, to induce him to enter the apartment with us. His refusal annoyed us both. It was incomprehensible. We, however, prepared ourselves for the night.

Drayton established himself in the forward starboard corner on the bunk, looking aft—the shadow's corner. I made myself comfortable in the port corner aft, diagonally opposite and facing him. We thus between us commanded a full view of the cabin and the four state-rooms, the doors of which we had reopened. The dog roamed restlessly about the decks until a little before midnight, when I heard him lie down across the entrance to the companion-way.

At a quarter to one—I looked at my watch at the moment—without any premonition, the three cabin lamps—one over Drayton's head, one over mine, and one in the centre, over the table—suddenly became dim. This was surprising, as we had carefully filled and trimmed them all before lighting them.

I got up to examine that nearest me, turning my back to Drayton. As I did so I heard the peculiar click of the hammer of a pistol. Turning again, I saw my companion, with his cocked revolver in hand, step to the floor. His face was pale and rigid, and his eyes fierce and fixed. He moved to the table and raised the weapon.

With an indescribable sensation of dread I looked in the direction of his aim, and there, not five feet from where I stood, on the inside edge of one of the ports, I saw a large, coarse, bloated hand clinging, and behind it, outside, at the shoulder, the ghastly, brutal face of the man I had seen cross the deck in the afternoon. The dull, lead-coloured eyes seemed peering into the cabin.

Almost overcome by mingled horror and disgust (I can convey no idea of the loathsomeness of this man's appearance), I was somewhat relieved by the cold, clear tones of Drayton's voice, as I heard him say:

"Now, my man, I have you in range. I'm a passable shot, and if you move I shall fire. Who are you? and what mischief are you engaged in here?"

There was no reply. After a pause, Drayton spoke again:

"I intend to have an answer. If you don't speak up before I say three, I shall fire. We are not to be trifled with."

Still there was no reply; and after a pause of about ten seconds, Drayton counted very slowly, "one—two—three," and then followed the flash and report of a pistol.

The man at the port-hole did not move. Drayton, with wonderful nerve, raised the weapon again; but even as he did so the face and hand disappeared. Not instantly; but, as if drawn slowly back, they seemed to be swallowed up in the darkness without. As they faded away, the light in the cabin waned again; and crying to me "Stay where you are, and keep the dog with you" (the dog had bounded into the cabin, half involuntarily, I suppose, at the report of the pistol), Drayton hurried on deck.

I seized Roy's collar, and, at the moment, the doors of all four state-rooms, although there was not the slightest lurch of the vessel, slowly but steadily swung and silently closed, as did also the skylights, the ports, and the sliding hatch and doors of the companion-way, shutting me in alone with the dog.

My recollection of what followed is perfectly clear—nay, vivid—but it is not in my power to write an adequate description of it. All I can do is to relate what occurred as I actually saw and felt it. Appreciation of the horror of my position I must leave, with but an intimation of it, to the imagination of the reader.

On finding myself thus closed in, my first undefined idea, naturally, was to reach the deck and call Drayton. I was startled, but I do not think that I was afraid at first. Some new trick was about to be played upon us, and I wanted him to see what it was with me.

It did not occur to me that the companion-hatch could have been made fast, so I turned to the steps, the dog accompanying me closely—too closely, in fact. As I raised my foot I felt that I was unable to place it on the first stair. It was as though the exit from the cabin had been walled up.

A second attempt was equally in vain. I endeavoured to precipitate myself into the companion-way. I might as well have tried to walk through a wall of solid rock. and still, in extending my hands and looking before me, I felt nothing but a soft though forbidding pressure, and saw nothing but the open stairway.

I cannot say whether my sensation was one of terror or bewilderment—perhaps it was a mingling of the two. I called aloud with the full strength of my lungs, but the sound of my voice seemed strangely muffled, even while I was perfectly conscious that I had full possession of my senses.

During all this time the dog had been pressing close against me, trembling like a leaf, shuddering. I laid my hand on his head. It was hot to the touch. I looked down at him. With his ears laid back, his eyes protruding, and his tongue hanging out, he was the picture of terror—such a picture as I hope never to see again. A great,

fearless, noble mastiff utterly abject, and cowering like any little cur.

And now the cabin lamps were suddenly extinguished, and only a small lantern left burning on the table. The atmosphere became oppressively hot, and a musty, mouldy odour pervaded the apartment. In the deepened darkness I turned to look behind me with an added foreboding. Beneath the door of the starboard state-room, forward, I saw a brilliant line of light, and in the same place as before, the weird shadow of the afternoon, now bent over as though he who cast it there were listening at the door.

With my hand still on the mastiff's head, and impelled by some power not my own, and stronger than my will, I moved towards the shade. My third step placed me directly in front of one of the large leather lounging chairs, which was so situated as to squarely face the dreadful corner. Into this chair I sank not only involuntarily, but seemingly by physical compulsion, the dog standing against it beside me.

As again I laid my hand upon him I felt that he was rigid and strained in every muscle. While I gazed at the shadow it slowly became upright and huge, and cast itself clearly upon the door, which immediately swung open without sound.

With this phenomenon an indefinable sensation of almost intolerable pressure came upon me. I felt as though bound with iron or incased in lead. The chair seemed to hold me in a vice-like embrace. All power of motion left me. I tried to speak. I was dumb. The silence was awful. My sense of loneliness appalling. My mind, however, was most active and acute, and after a moment every faculty seemed to be concentrated upon attention to what was going on before me.

Within the state-room I saw a short, thick-set man seated on a camp-stool beside the berth, under a hanging lamp which shed a brilliant light. With his face in his hands and his head leaning against the partition

I saw one who, as I looked, raised his right arm in the air, and dealt the sleeping man a terrible blow

before him, he seemed asleep; but I could not see that he breathed.

Behind him, and half turned from me, I saw one standing who seemed to me to be the original of the shadow, and who, as I looked, raised his right arm in the air, and dealt the sleeping man a terrible blow at the back of the head with a heavy marline-spike, crushing the skull, and killing the victim instantly. No blood followed the stroke, and although, as I have said, the room was brilliantly illuminated, I saw no shadows.

The murderer seized the dead man's body before it fell to the floor, and opening the forward door of the state-room, which led into the between decks space, passed out,

dragging the corpse with him, and disappeared in the darkness.

Almost at once, however, he returned, and as he came towards me into the cabin, I again recognised the horrible face of the giant I had seen cross the deck above in the afternoon—the face of the man at whose hand I believed that Drayton, with unerring aim, had fired in the open port-hole a little while before.

He entered the apartment, and, following with my eyes the direction of his movements, I saw him extend his hand and take up from the bunk, where he might have been sitting a few moments earlier, what appeared to me to be a carpenter's chisel or screw-driver.

With this he again vanished into the darkness between-decks. As he did so the forward door of the state-room closed behind him, and simultaneously the light within went out, and the lamps in the cabin were relighted, while the doors and port-holes, skylight, and companion-hatch were, I felt, reopened.

My hand being still upon the dog, I perceived a tremor or shudder pass through his entire frame, as with a deep sigh he instantly thereafter dashed from the cabin to the deck. I heard Drayton's voice call loudly: "Roy! Roy!" and then a splash in the silent sea.

Freed from the terrible pressure, I now arose blindly to make my own way to the deck from the stifling atmosphere of the cabin; but the walls and furniture seemed to whirl and spin round and round me—and I remembered no more.

When I recovered consciousness I was again seated in the heavy chair, the cabin was cool, and there was the odour of brandy about. Drayton was standing over me with his hand on my forehead, and I heard the tramp of feet on the deck above. I looked at my watch, which I had laid open on the table several hours earlier, and it told me that I had been in the cabin alone with the dog but ten minutes at the uttermost.

From my companion I learnt that after leaving me he had called the forward watch and one of the men from the deckhouse, and searched fruitlessly for a trace of the man at the port-hole. As he had approached the companion-way, the dog had dashed from it, foaming at the mouth, and in his madness leapt into the sea. Every effort was made to save him, but we never saw the poor fellow again.

In the morning we made an examination of the room in which I had seen the phantom murder committed (if I may describe as "phantom" those who seemed no less real flesh and blood than myself) and of the between-decks space forward of it, but we discovered nothing. At the edge of the port-hole, however, at the spot where the hand had been, we found the bullet from the revolver buried in the wood.

By this time the seamen had gotten an inkling of the character of the ship's mystery; but as none of them had actually seen anything (nor, strangely enough, had heard the shot) Drayton's good sense and firmness triumphed over their superstition, and we were enabled to work the derelict to port without difficulty and without further incident.

We made Gibraltar on the morning of the thirteenth of December, and, immediately reporting the circumstances under which we had found the *Emily Brand*, we turned her over to the authorities.

The Queen's Proctor in Admiralty at once ordered a special survey of the vessel by the surveyor of shipping, assisted by the marshal of the court and an expert diver. The result of this survey was a report substantially embodying the facts as to the finding of the vessel and her condition here related by me. In addition to this, however, the stains on the old cutlass and on the vessel's rail were subjected to a chemical analysis by which it was proved that they were not blood stains, and this fact was made an item of the report.

Upon this unsatisfactory conclusion Drayton and I determined to communicate to the authorities an account of the almost incredible events of our first day and night aboard the mysterious vessel. This we were enabled to do without making ourselves ridiculous, through the good offices of the governor of the fortress, to whom Drayton was well known. Thereupon a second survey was ordered, during which the entire cargo was removed.

At the request of one of the officials engaged in this second survey, I accompanied him aboard the brigantine for the purpose of pointing out the movements of the phantom

murderer. This official developed a rather remarkable detective ingenuity. He subjected me, in the course of our conversation, to a close cross-examination concerning the chisel or screw-driver, for which the assassin had returned after the murder.

On my remaining firm in my conviction as to what the tool appeared to be, he confided to me his theory of the terrible mock murder I had witnessed. He believed, he told me, that the crime which had caused the vessel's abandonment had been revealed to me "by the spirits," as he expressed it, "of the principal actors."

Proceeding on this theory, he personally (permitting me to accompany him) made a careful examination of the fatal state-room and of the now empty between-decks space forward, his object being to discover some evidence of the use of such a tool, to the appearance of which he attached the greatest importance.

At a point about fifteen feet distant from the state-room he found a narrow strip of oak about an inch in thickness and five feet in length, projecting, by its thickness, beyond the smooth surface of the vessel's inner shell. On scrutinising it closely we perceived that it had been fixed in its place by means of five screws, apparently of brass, as the heads were incrusted with bright green rust or mould.

We immediately summoned assistance, procured a screwdriver, and removed the strip. Having accomplished this, we discovered that the strip had been affixed over a perpendicular succession of the joints of the narrow planks of the vessel's interior hull, which sprang outward as they were released, far enough for my companion to insert his fingers behind them. Wrenching them off, we found to our horror, wedged in the inner space, the grinning skeleton of a man, upon which hung shreds of clothing.

As this skeleton was lifted out, something dropped to the deck with a metallic sound, and rolled to my feet. I stooped and picked it up. It was a plain band of gold—a ring. On the inside was engraved: "From H. M. to J. B."

The clothing of the unfortunate man appeared to have been partially eaten by rats. At the time it seemed to me a fortunate thing that it had not been entirely destroyed, as otherwise the ring, which had been retained in one of the folds, would long before have slipped from the bony finger to the bottom of the hold, and rendered positive identification, perhaps, impossible. The skeleton was clean, dry, and white, and on further examination we found that the back of the skull had been fractured, apparently by a blow from a club.

Since our arrival at Gibraltar, and about a week before the finding of the skeleton, Drayton had written to the owners of the brigantine at New York, having learned who they were from the surveyor of shipping, to whom her missing captain had been well and favourably known. In his letter to these gentlemen Drayton had asked for such a history of the *Emily Brand* as her owners were willing and prepared to give.

At the end of about three weeks from the date on which the skeleton was found (we in the meanwhile having had a run up the Mediterranean and back) a new captain and new crew arrived from New York to take the brigantine on to Genoa, for which port she had been originally bound. The captain, Mr. Church, presented himself on board the *Nomad* the day of his arrival, as the bearer of a long letter to Drayton from Mr. Barnes, the senior member of the owning firm. From that letter I transcribed the ensuing account of the *Emily Brand*.

"The brigantine was built for us about two years ago at Portland, Maine. Including her present voyage she has made four in all. The first two were prosperous, and on neither of them did anything out of the ordinary run occur. A year ago last November, however, she sailed from this port, with a miscellaneous cargo, for Lisbon, taken out by Captain James Blaisdel, who had been in our employ for many years, and who had commanded her on her two preceding voyages.

"Among her crew was a Swede or Norwegian of the name of Peterson, a gigantic, ill-favoured fellow, who had been injured in our service some time before by a fall from the rigging, in which he sustained a severe contusion of the brain. For several months he lay in the hospital here, in what was believed to be a hopeless condition of imbecility; but

finally, having recovered, or apparently recovered, he applied for a berth on the *Emily Brand*.

"On the 11th of December we received news by cable from Mr. Riggs, the mate, of the death of Captain Blaisdel and the man Peterson. On the 26th a letter came, giving the particulars, which were briefly as follows: About the eighth day out from New York Peterson developed symptoms of a relapse of his disease (caused by the fall), which seemed, however, to affect his mind only with a sort of intermittent stupor.

"He exhibited no signs of mania or violence, and was capable of performing his light duties about one half the time. He was accordingly not confined, and the master did what he could for him, treating him with the utmost kindness, and advising him to lay off from his work. This he did for several days, but apparently without beneficial effect.

"On the night of 5th December, Mr. Blaisdel turned in at eight bells (twelve o'clock). The weather was clear, the wind over the port quarter, and the moon lighted up the deck. The vessel was then about latitude 38° north, longitude 17° west, near the point at which you picked her up. Just before two bells (one o'clock) the man at the wheel saw Peterson, whom he recognised by his great size, cross the deck amidship to the starboard rail and throw something into the sea. On being hailed by this man, Peterson went aft, and said that he had thrown a pair of old shoes overboard. He was in his stockinged feet.

"In the morning the master failed to appear, and after waiting a reasonable time the steward knocked at his door. Receiving no response, he called Mr. Riggs, the mate, who entered the stateroom and found it empty. The berth had not been occupied. When after a search it became evident that the captain could not be found, Miller, the man who had taken the wheel at midnight, told the mate of Peterson's appearance, and his conversation with him.

"Peterson was sent for, and found in his bunk, apparently sleeping. He was aroused, and brought on deck in a very excited condition, and on being interrogated by Mr. Riggs, he became incoherent and violent. The mate thereupon ordered two of the men to seize him; but as they approached to do so, he eluded them, and darting to the vessel's side, jumped overboard. They put her about and lowered a boat immediately, but he was never seen again.

"It seems clear that in a fit of insanity he murdered the captain and threw his body into the sea during the night. How this was accomplished no one knows, for no noise was heard, nor were any traces of violence found about the vessel.

"On her present voyage Mr. Riggs, the former mate, went as master of the vessel. He was, I believe, thirty-six years of age, married, and had one child—a little girl of five or six years. It is our custom to allow our masters to purchase an interest in the vessels they command, and Mr. Riggs and his wife owned two-sixteenths of the *Emily Brand*. He was a man of the highest character, and thoroughly competent to go as master. On this last voyage his wife and child accompanied him.

"I cannot form the slightest conjecture concerning the strange disappearance of poor Riggs and his family, with all on board, and I have but little belief that they will ever be heard of again."

From this letter it became evident that the skeleton found up in the between-decks space was that of Captain James Blaisdel, with whose name the initials engraved in the ring corresponded.

The remains thus identified were interred at Gibraltar.

Some hope of the rescue of the castaways was for a time entertained, as it was learned that the boat (the brigantine had but one) in which they were presumed to have left the vessel was a life-boat, new, light, and incapable of sinking. Moreover, it was known that they could not have encountered any bad weather for many days after parting from the *Emily Brand*. Accordingly the widest publicity was given to the fact of their having disappeared, and for more than a year the civilised world was searched, upon the chance that they had made some land or been picked up by some passing vessel. But no trace of the life-boat or any of its occupants was ever discovered.

THE TOMB OF HIS ANCESTORS.

By Rudyard Kipling.

Some people will tell you that if there were but a single loaf of bread in all India it would be divided equally between the Plowdens, the Trevors, the Beadons, and the Rivett-Carnacs. That is only a way of saying that certain families serve India generation after generation as dolphins follow in line across the open sea.

To take a small and obscure case. There has always been at least one representative of the Devonshire Chinns in or near Central India since the days of Lieutenant-Fireworker Humphrey Chinn, of the Bombay European regiment, who assisted at the capture of Seringapatam in 1799. Alfred Ellis Chinn, his younger brother, commanded a regiment of Bombay grenadiers from 1804 to 1813, when he saw some mixed fighting; and in 1834, one John Chinn, of the same family—we will call him John Chinn the First—came to light as a level-headed administrator in time of trouble at a place called Mundesur. He died young, but he left his mark on the country, and the Honourable the Board of Directors of the Honourable the East India Company embodied his virtues in a stately resolution, and paid for the expenses of his tomb among the Satpura hills.

He was succeeded by his son, Lionel Chinn, who left the little old Devonshire home just in time to be severely wounded in the Mutiny. He spent his working life within a hundred and fifty miles of John Chinn's grave, and rose to the command of a regiment of little, wild bill-men, many of whom had known his father. His son, John, was born in a small thatched-roofed, mud-walled cantonment, which is to-day eighty miles from the nearest railway, in the heart of scrubby, rocky, tigerish country. Colonel Lionel Chinn served thirty years before he retired. In the Canal his steamer passed the outward bound troopship, carrying his son east to take on the family routine.

The Chinns are luckier than most folk, because they know exactly what they must do.

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Then there rose up a little, white-haired, wizened ape of a man see page 610

A clever Chinn passes for the Bombay Civil Service, and gets away to Central India, where everybody is glad to see him. A dull Chinn enters the Police department or the Woods and Forest, and sooner or later he, too, appears in Central India, and that is what gave rise to the old saying "Central India is inhabited by Bhils, Mairs, and Chinns all very much alike." The breed is small-boned dark, and silent, and the stupidest of them are good shots. John Chinn the Second was rather clever, but as the eldest son he entered the army, according to Chinn tradition. His duty was to abide in his father's regiment for the term of his natural life though the corps was one which most men would have paid heavily to avoid. They were irregulars, like the Chinns small, dark, and blackish, clothed in rifle green, with black leather trimmings; and friends called them the "Wuddars," which means a race of low caste people who dig up rats to eat; but the Wuddars did not resent it. They were the only Wuddars and their points of pride were these.

Firstly, they had fewer English officers than any native regiment; secondly, their subalterns were not mounted on parade as is the rule, but walked at the head of their men. A man who can hold his own with the Wuddars at the quick-step must be sound in wind and limb. Thirdly, they were the most *pukka shikarries* (out and out hunters) in all India. Fourthly—up to one hundredthly—they were the Wuddars—Chinn's Irregular Bhil Levies in the old days, but now henceforward, and for ever, the Wuddars.

No Englishman entered their mess except for love or through family usage. The officers talked to their soldiers in a tongue not two hundred folk in India understood, and the men were their children, all drawn from the Bhils, who are, perhaps, the strangest of the many strange races in India. They were and at heart are, wild men; furtive, shy, full of untold superstitions.

The races whom we call natives of the country found the Bhil in possession of the land when they first broke into that part of the world thousands of years ago. The books call them Pre-Aryan, Aboriginal, Dravidian, and so forth, and in other words that is what the Bhils call themselves.

When a Rajput chief who can sing his pedigree backwards for twelve hundred years, is set on the throne his investiture is not complete or lawful till he has been marked on the forehead with blood from the veins of a Bhil. The Rajputs say the ceremony has no meaning but the little Bhil knows that it is the last last shallow of his old rights, as the long-ago owner of the soil.

He turned to do battle for his [illegible] (See page [illegible])

That night he devoted to an orgia. (page 614)

Centuries of oppression and massacre made the Bhil a cruel and half-crazy thief and cattle-stealer, and when the English came he seemed to be almost as open to civilisation as the tigers of his own jungles. But John Chinn the First, with two or three other men, went into his country, lived with him, learned his language, shot the deer that stole his poor crops, and won his confidence, so that some Bhils learned to plough and sow, while others were coaxed into the Company's service to police their friends

When they understood that standing in line did not mean instant murder, they accepted soldiering as a cumbrous but amusing kind of shikar, and were zealous to keep the wild Bhils under control That was the thin edge of the wedge. John Chinn the First gave them written promises that if they were good from a certain date on, the Government would overlook previous offences; and since John Chinn was never known to break his word—he promised once to hang a Bhil locally esteemed invulnerable, and hanged him in front of his tribe for seven proved murders—the Bhils settled down as much as they knew how. It was slow, unseen work, of the sort that is being done all over India to-day, and, though John Chinn's only visible reward came, as I have said, in the shape of a grave at Government expense, the people of the hills never forgot him.

Colonel Lionel Chinn knew and loved them too, and they were very fairly civilised, for Bhils, before his service ended. Many of them could hardly be distinguished from low-caste Hindu farmers; but in the south, where John Chinn was buried, the wildest of them still clung to the Satpura ranges, cherishing a legend that some day Jan Chinn, as they called him, would return to his own, and in the meantime mistrusting the white man and his ways. The least excitement would stampede them at random, plundering, and now and then killing; but if they were handled discreetly they grieved like children, and promised never to do it again.

The Bhils of the regiment were virtuous in many ways, but they needed humouring. They felt bored and homesick unless taken after tiger as beaters; and their cold-blooded daring—all Wuddars shoot tigers on foot. it is their caste-mark—made even the officers wonder. They would follow up a wounded tiger as unconcernedly as though it were a sparrow with a broken wing, and this through a country full of caves, and rifts, and pits, where a wild beast could hold a dozen men at his mercy. They had their own methods of smoking out a tigress with her cubs, and would shout and laugh while the furious beast charged home on the rifles. Now and then a little man was brought to barracks with his head smashed in or his ribs torn away; but his companions never learnt caution. They contented themselves with settling the tiger.

Young John Chinn was decanted at the verandah of the lonely mess-house, from the back seat of a two-wheeled cart; his gun-cases cascading all round him The slender, little, hookey-nosed boy looked as forlorn as a strayed goat, when he slapped the white dust off his knees, and the cart jolted down the glaring road. But in his heart he was contented; after all this was the place where he had been born, and things were not much changed since he had been sent to England, a child, fifteen years ago.

There were one or two new buildings, but the air, and the smell, and the sunshine were the same; and the little green men that crossed the parade-ground looked very familiar. Three weeks ago John Chinn would have said he did not remember a word of the Bhil tongue, but at the mess door he found his lips moving in sentences that he did not understand—bits of old nursery rhymes and tail-ends of such orders as his father used to give the men.

The Colonel watched him come up the steps and laughed

"Look!" he said to the Major. "No need to ask the young 'un's breed. He's a *pukka* Chinn Might be his father in the Fifties over again."

"Hope he'll shoot as close," said the Major. "He's brought enough ironmongery with him"

"Wouldn't be a Chinn if he didn't. Look at him blowin' his nose Regular Chinn beak Flourishes his handkerchief like his father. It's the second edition—line for line."

"Fairy tale by Jove," said the Major,

peering through the slats of the jalousies. "If he's the lawful heir, he'll . . . Old Chinn could no more pass that chick without fiddling with it than . . ."

"His son!" said the Colonel, jumping up

"Well, I be blowed!" said the Major. The boy's eye had been caught by a split reed screen that hung on a slue between the verandah pillars, and, mechanically, he had tweaked the edge to set it level. Old Chinn had sworn three times a day at that screen for many years; he could never get it to his satisfaction; and his son entered the anteroom in the middle of a five-deep silence They made him welcome for his father's sake, and, as they took stock of him, for his own. He was ridiculously like the portrait of the Colonel on the wall, and when he had washed a little of the dust out of his throat he went to his quarters with the old man's short, noiseless jungle-step.

"So much for heredity," said the Major "That comes of four generations among the Bhils."

"And the men know it," said a Wing officer. "They've been waiting for this youth with their tongues hanging out. I am persuaded that unless he absolutely clubs 'em over the head, they'll lie down by companies and worship him."

"Nothin' like havin' a father before you," said the Major. "I'm a parvenu with my chaps. I've only been twenty years in the regiment, and my revered parent was a simple squire. There's no getting at the bottom of a Bhil's mind. Now, *why* is the superior Mahommedan bearer that young Chinn brought with him fleeing across country with his bundle?" He stepped into the verandah and shouted after the man—a typical new-joined subaltern's servant who speaks English and cheats in proportion.

"What is it?" he called

"Plenty bad man here I going, sar," was the reply. "Have taken my Sahib's keys, and say will shoot."

"Doocid lucid—doocid convincin'. How those up-country thieves can leg it! Johnny's been badly frightened by someone" The Major strolled to his quarters to dress for mess.

Young Chinn, walking like a man in a dream, had fetched a compass round the entire cantonment before going to his own tiny cottage. The captain's quarters in which he had been born delayed him for a little; then he looked at the well-on-the parade-ground, where he would sit of evenings with his nurse, and the ten-by-fourteen church where the officers went to service if a chaplain of any official creed happened to come along. It seemed very small as compared with the gigantic buildings he used to look up at, but it was the same place.

From time to time he passed a knot of silent soldiers, who saluted, and they might have been the very men who had carried him on their backs when he was in his first knickerbockers A faint light burned in his room, and as he entered hands clasped his feet, and a voice murmured from the floor.

"Who is it?" said young Chinn, not knowing he spoke in the Bhil tongue

"I bore you in my arms, Sahib, when I was a strong man and you were a week old—crying, crying, crying. I am your servant, as I was your father's before you. We are all your servants."

Young Chinn could not trust himself to reply, and the voice went on:

"I have taken your keys from that fat foreigner, and sent him away, and the studs are in the shirt for mess. Who should know, if I do not know? And so the baby has become a man, and forgets his nurse, but my nephew shall make a good servant, or I will beat him twice a day."

Then there rose up, with a rattle, as straight as a Bhil arrow, a little, white-haired, wizened ape of a man, with chain and medals and orders on his tunic, stammering, saluting, and trembling. Behind him, a young and wiry Bhil, in uniform, was taking the trees out of Chinn's mess-boots.

Chinn's eyes were full of tears. The old man held out his keys

"Foreigners are bad people He will never come back again. We are all servants of your father's son Has the Sahib forgotten who took him to see the trapped tiger in the village across the river when his mother was so frightened and he was so brave?"

The scene came back to him in great

magic-lantern flashes. "Bukta," he cried, and all in a breath: "You promised nothing should hurt me. *Is* it Bukta?"

The man was at his feet a second time. "He has not forgotten. He remembers his own people as his father remembered. Now can I die. But first I will live and show the Sahib how to kill tigers. That *that* yonder is my nephew. If he is not a good servant, beat him and send him to me, and I will surely kill him, for now the Sahib is with his own people. Ai, Jan *baba!* Jan *baba!* My Jan *baba!* I will stay here and see that this ape does his work well. Take off his boots, fool. Sit down upon the bed, Sahib, and let me look. It *is* Jan Baba!"

He pushed forward the hilt of his sword as a sign of service, which is an honour paid only to viceroys, governors, generals, or little children whom one loves dearly. Chinn touched the hilt mechanically with three fingers, muttering he knew not what. It happened to be the old answer of his childhood, when Bukta in play called him the little general Sahib.

He pushed forward the hilt of his sword as a sign of service

The Major's quarters were opposite Chinn's, and when he heard his servant gasp with surprise he looked across the room. Then the Major sat on the bed and whistled, for the spectacle of the senior native commissioned officer of the regiment, an "unmixed" Bhil, a Companion of the Order of British India, with thirty-five years' spotless service in the army, and a position among his own people superior to that of many up-country princelings, valeting the last-joined subaltern was a little too much for his nerves.

The throaty bugles blew the mess call that has a long legend behind it. First a few piercing notes like the shrieks of beaters in a far-away cover, and next, large, full, and smooth, the refrain of the wild song: "And oh, and oh! the green pulse of Mundore—Mundore!"

"All little children were in bed when the Sahib heard that call last," said Bukta, passing Chinn a clean handkerchief. The call brought back memories of his cot under the mosquito-netting, his mother's kiss, and the sound of footsteps growing fainter as he dropped asleep among his men. So he hooked his new mess-jacket, and went to dinner like a prince who has newly inherited his father's crown.

Old Bukta swaggered forth curling his whiskers. He knew his own value, and no money and no rank within the gift of the Government would have induced him to put studs in young officers' shirts, or to hand them clean ties. Yet, when he took off his uniform that night, and squatted among his fellows for a quiet smoke, he told them what he had done, and they said that he was entirely right. Thereat Bukta propounded a

theory which to a white mind would have seemed raving insanity; but the whispering, level-headed little men of war considered it from every point of view, and thought that there might be a great deal in it.

At mess under the oil-lamps the talk turned as usual to the unfailing subject of *shikar*—big game shooting of every kind and under all sorts of conditions. Young Chinn opened his eyes when he understood that each one of his companions had shot several tigers in the Wuddar style—on foot that is—and made no more of the business than if the brute had been a dog.

"In nine cases out of ten," said the Major, "a tiger is almost as dangerous as a porcupine. But the tenth time you come home feet first."

That set all talking, and long before midnight Chinn's brain was in a whirl with stories of tigers—man-eaters and cattle-killers each pursuing his own business as methodically as clerks in an office; new tigers that had lately come into such-and-such a district; and old, friendly beasts of great cunning, known by nicknames in the mess, such as "Puggy," who was lazy, with huge paws, and "Mrs. Malaprop," who turned up when you never expected her, and made female noises. Then they spoke of Bhil superstitions, a wide and picturesque field, till young Chinn, the mildest-mannered youth that ever took a glass of wine across the table, hinted that they must be pulling his leg.

"'Deed we aren't," said the man on his left. "We know all about you. You're a Chinn and all that, and you've a sort of vested right here; but if you don't believe what *we're* telling you, what will you do when old Bukta begins *his* stories? He knows about ghost tigers, and tigers that go to a hell of their own; and tigers that walk on their hind feet; and your grandpapa's riding-tiger as well. Odd he hasn't spoken of that yet."

"You know you've an ancestor buried down Satpura way, don't you?" said the Major, as Chinn smiled irresolutely.

"Of course I do," said Chinn, who knew the chronicle of the Book of Chinns by heart.

"Well, I wasn't sure. Your revered ancestor, my boy, according to the Bhils, has a tiger of his own—a saddle-tiger that he rides round the country whenever he feels inclined. I don't call it decent in an ex-collector's ghost; but that is what the Southern Bhils believe. Even our men, who might be called moderately brave, don't care to beat that country if they hear a rumour that Jan Chinn is running about on his tiger. It is supposed to be a clouded animal—not stripy, but blotchy, like a tortoise-shell tom cat. No end of a brute it is, and a sure sign of war or pestilence or—or something. There's a nice family legend for you."

"What's the origin of it, d'you suppose?" said Chinn.

"Ask the Satpura Bhils. Old John Chinn was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Perhaps it was the tiger's revenge, or perhaps he's huntin' 'em still. You must go to his tomb one of these days and inquire. Bukta will probably attend to that. He was asking me before you came whether by any ill-luck you had already bagged your tiger. If not, he is going to enter you under his own wing. Of course, for *you* of all men, it's imperative. You'll have a first-class time with old Bukta."

The Major was not wrong. Bukta kept an anxious eye on young Chinn at drill, and it was noticeable that the first time the new officer lifted up his voice in an order the whole line started. Even the Colonel was taken aback, for it might have been Colonel Lionel Chinn returned from Devonshire with a new lease of life. Bukta had continued to develop his theory, and it was almost accepted as a matter of faith in the lines, since every word and gesture on young Chinn's part so confirmed it.

The old man arranged early that his darling should wipe out the reproach of not having shot a tiger; but he was not content to take the first or any beast that happened to arrive. In his own villages he dispensed the high, low, and middle justice, and when his people—naked and fluttered—came to him with word of a beast marked down, he bade them send spies to the kill and the watering-place that he might be sure the quarry was such an one as suited the dignity of such a man.

Three or four times the reckless trackers

returned, most truthfully saying the beast was mangy, undersized; a tigress worn with nursing or a broken-toothed old male, and Bukta would curb young Chinn's impatience. At last, a noble animal was marked down—a ten-foot cattle-killer with a huge roll of loose skin along the belly, glossy-hided, full-frilled about the neck, whiskered, frisky, and young. He had slain a man in sport, they said.

"Let him be fed," quoth Bukta, and the village dutifully drove out a cow to amuse him, that he might lie up near by.

Princes and potentates have taken ship for India, and spent great moneys for the mere glimpse of beasts one-half as fine as this of Bukta's.

"It is not good," said he to the Colonel when he asked for shooting-leave, "that my Colonel's son, who may be . . . that my Colonel's son should lose his innocence on any small jungle beast. That may come after. I have waited long for this, which is a tiger. He has come in from the Mair country. In seven days we will return with the skin."

The mess gnashed their teeth enviously. Bukta, had he chosen, might have asked them all. But he went out alone with Chinn, two days in a shooting-cart and a day on foot till they came to a rocky, glary valley, with a pool of good water in it. It was a parching day, and the boy very naturally stripped and went in for a bathe, leaving Bukta by the clothes. A white skin shows far against brown jungle, and what Bukta beheld on Chinn's back and right shoulder dragged him forward step by step with staring eyeballs.

"I'd forgotten it isn't decent to strip before a man of his position," said Chinn flouncing in the water. "How the little devil stares! What is it, Bukta?"

"The mark!" was the whispered answer.

"It is nothing. It was born on me. You know how it is with my people!" Chinn was a little annoyed. The dull red birthmark on his shoulder, something like a conventionalised Tartar cloud, had slipped his memory or he would not have bathed. It came, so they said at home, in alternate generations, and was not at all pretty. He hurried ashore, dressed again, and went on till they met two or three Bhils, who promptly fell on their faces. "My people," grunted Bukta, not condescending to notice them, "and so your people, Sahib. When I was a young man we were fewer but not so weak. Now, we are many but poor stock. As may be remembered. How will you shoot him, Sahib? From a tree; from a shelter which my people shall build; by day or by night?"

"On foot and in the daytime," said Young Chinn.

"That was your custom, as I have heard," said Bukta to himself. "I will get news of him. Then you and I will go to him. I will carry one gun. You have yours. There is no need of more. What tiger shall stand against *thee*"

He was marked down by a little waterhole at the head of a ravine; full-gorged and half asleep in the May sunlight. He was walked up like a partridge, and he turned to do battle for his life. Bukta made no motion to raise his rifle, but kept his eyes on Chinn, who met the shattering roar of the charge with a single shot—it seemed to him hours as he sighted—which tore through the throat, smashing the backbone below the neck and between the shoulders. The brute coughed, choked, and fell, and before Chinn knew well what had happened Bukta bade him stay still while he paced the distance between his feet and the ringing jaws.

"Fifteen," said Bukta, "short paces. No need for a second shot, Sahib. He bleeds cleanly where he lies, and we need not spoil the skin. I said there would be no need of these, but they came in case."

Suddenly the sides of the ravine were crowned with the heads of Bukta's people; a force that could have blown the ribs out of the beast had Chinn's shot failed; but their guns were hidden, and they appeared as interested beaters; some five or six waiting the word to skin. Bukta watched the life fade out of the eyes, lifted one hand and turned on his heel.

"No need to show that *we* care," said he. "Now, after this, we can kill what we choose. Put out your hand, Sahib."

Chinn obeyed. It was entirely steady, and Bukta nodded. "That also was your custom

My men skin quickly. They will carry the skin to cantonments. Will the Sahib come to my poor village for the night and, perhaps, forget I am his officer."

"But those men—the beaters. They have worked hard, and perhaps—"

"Oh, if they skin clumsily, we will skin them. They are my people. In the lines I am one thing. Here I am another."

That was very true. When Bukta doffed uniform and reverted to the fragmentary dress of his own people, he left his civilisation of drill in the next world. That night, after a little talk with his subjects, he devoted to an orgie; and a Bhil orgie is a thing not to be safely written about. Chinn, flushed with triumph, was in the thick of it, but the meaning of the mysteries was hidden. Wild folk came and pressed about his knees with offerings. He gave his flask to the elders of the village. They grew eloquent, and wreathed him about with flowers; gifts and loans, not all seemly, were thrust upon him, and infernal music rolled and maddened round red fires, while singers sang songs of the ancient times, and danced peculiar dances. The aboriginal liquors are very potent, and Chinn was compelled to taste them often, but, unless the stuff had been drugged, how came he to fall asleep suddenly, and to waken late the next day—half a march from the village?

"The Sahib was very tired; a little before dawn he went to sleep," Bukta explained. "My people carried him here, and now it is time we should go back to cantonments."

The voice, smooth and deferential, the step steady and silent, made it hard to believe that only a few hours before Bukta was yelling and capering with naked fellow-devils of the scrub.

"My people were very pleased to see the Sahib. They will never forget. When next the Sahib goes out recruiting, he will go to my people, and they will give him as many men as he needs."

Chinn kept his own council except as to the shooting of the tiger, and Bukta embroidered that tale with a shameless tongue. The skin was certainly one of the finest ever hung up in the mess, and the first of many.

A night in a damp valley had no effect on him.

If Bukta could not accompany his boy on shooting-trips, he took care to put him in good hands, and Chinn learned more of the mind and desire of the wild Bhil in his marches and campings, by talks at twilight, or at wayside pools, than an unin-structed man could have come at in a lifetime.

Presently his men in the regiment grew bold to speak of their relatives—mostly in trouble—and to lay cases of tribal custom before him. They would say, squatting in his verandah at twilight, after the easy, confidential style of the Wuddars, that such-and-such a bachelor had run away with such-and-such a wife at a far-off village. Now, how many cows would Chinn Sahib consider a just fine? Or, again, if written order came from the Government that a Bhil

was to repair to a walled city of the plains to give evidence in a law-court, would it be wise to disregard that order? On the other hand, if it were obeyed, would the rash voyager return alive?

"But what have I to do with these things?" Chinn demanded of Bukta impatiently. "I am a soldier I do not know the law."

"Hoo! Law is for fools and white men Give them a large and loud order, and they will abide by it *Thou* art their law."

"But wherefore?"

Every trace of expression left Bukta's countenance The idea might have smitten him for the first time "How can I say?" he replied. "Perhaps it is on account of the old name. A Bhil does not love strange things. Give them orders, Sahib—two, three, four words at a time such as they can carry away in their heads. That is enough."

Chinn gave orders, then, valiantly; not realising that a word spoken in haste before mess became the dread unappealable law of villages beyond the smoky hills—was in truth no less than the Law of Jan Chinn the First; and who, so the whispered legend ran, had come back to earth, to oversee the third generation, in the body and bones of his grandson.

There could be no sort of doubt in this matter. All the Bhils knew that Jan Chinn reincarnated had honoured Bukta's village with his presence after slaying his first—in this life—tiger. That he had eaten and drunk with the people, as he was used; and—Bukta must have drugged the liquor very deeply—upon his back and right shoulder all men had seen the same angry red flying cloud that the high Gods had set on the flesh of Jan Chinn the First when first he came to the Bhil. As concerned the foolish world which has no eyes, he was a slim and young officer in the Wuddars; but his own people knew he was that very Jan Chinn, who had made the Bhil a man; and believing, they hastened to carry his words, careful never to alter them on the way.

Because the savage and the child who plays lonely games have one horror of being laughed at or questioned, the little folk kept their convictions to themselves, and the Colonel, who thought he knew his regiment, never guessed that each one of the six hundred quick-footed, beady-eyed rank and file, to attention beside their rifles, believed serenely and unshakenly that the subaltern on the left flank of the line was a demi-god twice born, the tutelary deity of their land and people. The Earth-gods themselves had stamped the incarnation, and who would dare to doubt the handiwork of the Earth-gods?

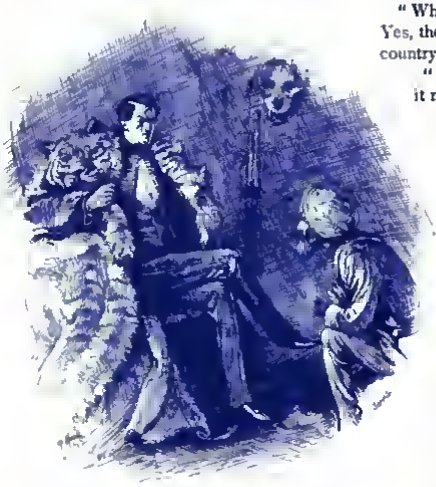
Chinn, being practical above all things, saw that his family name served him well in the lines and in camp His men gave no trouble—one does not commit regimental offences with a god in the chair of justice—and he was sure of the best beaters in the district when he needed them. They believed that the protection of Jan Chinn the First cloaked them, and were bold in that belief beyond the utmost daring of excited Bhils.

Chinn's quarters began to look like an amateur natural history museum, in spite of the heads and horns and skulls he sent home to Devonshire. The people, very humanly, learned the weak side of their god It is true he was unbribable, but bird-skins, butterflies, beetles, and, above all, news of big game pleased him. In other respects, too, he lived up to the Chinn tradition. He was fever-proof. A night in a damp valley, sitting out over a tethered goat, that would have filled the Major with a month's malaria, had no effect on him. He was, as they said, "salted before he was born."

Now in the autumn of his second year's service an uneasy rumour crept out of the earth and ran about among the Bhils. Chinn heard nothing of it till a brother officer said across the mess table: "Your revered ancestor's on the ramp in the Satpura country. You'd better look him up"

"I don't want to be disrespectful, but I'm a little sick of my revered ancestor Bukta talks of nothing else. What's the old boy supposed to be doing now?"

"Riding cross-country by moonlight on his processional tiger. That's the story. He's been seen by about two thousand Bhils, skipping along the tops of the Satpuras and scaring people to death They believe it devoutly, and all the Satpura chaps are worshipping away at his shrine—tomb I



"Now I will tell the truth, Bukta," he said.

mean—like good 'uns. You really ought to go down there. 'Must be a queer thing to see your grandfather treated as a god."

"What makes you think there's any truth in the tale?" said Chinn.

"Because all our men deny it straight off. They say they've never heard of Chinn's tiger. Now that's a manifest lie, because every Bhil *has*."

"There's only one thing you've overlooked," said the Colonel thoughtfully. "When a local god reappears on earth, it's always an excuse for trouble of some kind; and those Satpura Bhils are about as wild as your grandfather left them, young 'un. It means something."

"Meaning the Satpura Bhils may go on the war-path?" said Chinn.

"Can't say—as yet. Shouldn't be surprised a little bit."

"I haven't been told a syllable."

"'Proves it all the more. They are keeping something back."

"Bukta tells me everything, too, as a rule. Now, why didn't he tell me that?"

Chinn put the question directly to the old man that night, and the answer surprised him

"Why should I tell what is well known? Yes, the Clouded Tiger is out in the Satpura country."

"What do the wild Bhils think that it means?"

"They do not know. They wait. Sahib, what *is* coming? Say only one little word, and we will be content."

"We? What have tales from the South, where the jungly Bhils live, to do with drilled men?"

"When Jan Chinn wakes is no time for *any* Bhil to be quiet."

"But he has not waked, Bukta."

"Sahib," the old man's eyes were full of tender reproof, "if he does not wish to be seen, why does he go abroad in the moonlight? We know he is awake, but we do not know what he desires. Is it a sign for all the Bhils, or one that concerns the Satpura folk alone? Say one little word, Sahib, that I may carry it to the lines, and send on to our villages. Why does Jan Chinn ride out? Who has done wrong? Is it pestilence? Is it murrain? Will our children die? Is it a sword? Remember, Sahib, we are thy people and thy servants, and in this life I bore thee in my arms—not knowing."

"Bukta has evidently looked on the cup this evening," Chinn thought, "but if I can do anything to sooth the old chap I must. It's like the Mutiny rumours on a small scale."

He dropped into a deep wicker chair, over which was thrown his first tiger-skin, and his weight on the cushion flapped the clawed paws over his shoulders. He laid hold of them mechanically as he spoke, drawing the painted hide cloak-fashion about him.

"Now I will tell the truth, Bukta," he said, leaning forward, the dried muzzle on his shoulder, to invent a specious lie.

"I see that it is the truth," was the answer in a shaking voice.

"Jan Chinn goes abroad amoog the Satpuras, riding on the Clouded Tiger, ye say? Be it so. Therefore the sign of the wonder is for the Satpura Bhils only, and does not touch the Bhils who plough in the

north and east, the Bhils of the Khandeish, or any others, except the Satpura Bhils, who, as we know, are wild and foolish."

"It is, then, a sign for *them*. Good or bad?"

"Beyond doubt, good. For why should Jan Chinn make evil to those whom he has made men? The nights over yonder are hot; it is ill to lie in one bed over long without turning, and Jan Chinn would look again upon his people. So he rises, whistles the Clouded Tiger, and goes abroad a little by night to breathe the cool air. If the Satpura Bhils kept to their villages, and did not wander after dark, they would not see him. Indeed, Bukta, it is no more than that he would see the light again in his own country. Send this news south, and say that it is my word."

Bukta bowed to the floor. "Good Heavens!" thought Chinn, "and this blinking pagan is a first-class officer and as straight as a die! I may as well round it off neatly." He went on:

"*And* if the Satpura Bhil ask the meaning of the sign, tell them that Jan Chinn would see how they kept their old promises of good living. Perhaps they have plundered, perhaps they mean to disobey the orders of the Government; perhaps there is a dead man in the jungle, and so Jan Chinn has come to see."

"Is he then angry?"

"Bah! Am *I* ever angry with my Bhils? I say angry words, and threaten many things, *thou* knowest, Bukta. I have seen thee smile behind the hand; but I know, and thou knowest. The Bhils are my children. I have said it many times."

"Ay. We be thy children," said Bukta.

"And no otherwise is it with Jan Chinn. He would see the land he loved and the people once again. It is a good ghost, Bukta. I say it. Go and tell them. And I do hope devoutly," he added, "that it will calm 'em down." Flinging back the tiger skin, he rose with a large, unguarded yawn that showed his well-kept teeth. Bukta fled, to be received in the lines by a knot of panting inquirers.

"It is true," said Bukta. He wrapped himself in the skin, and spoke from it. He would see his own country again. The sign is not for us; and, indeed, he is a young man. How should he lie idle of nights? He says his bed is too hot and the air is bad. He goes to and fro for the love of night-running. He has said it."

The grey-whiskered assembly shuddered.

"He says the Bhils are his children. Ye know he does not lie. He has said it to me."

"But what of the Satpura Bhils? What is the sign for them?"

"None. It is only night-running, as I have said. He rides to see if they obey the Government, as he taught them in his first life."

"And what if they do not?"

"He did not say."

The light went out in Chinn's quarters.

"Look," said Bukta. "Now he goes away. None the less it is a good ghost as he has said. How shall we fear Jan Chinn who made the Bhil a man? His protection is on us; and ye know Jan Chinn never broke a protection spoken or written on paper. When he is older and has found him a wife he will lie in his bed till the morning."

A commanding officer is generally aware of the regimental state of mind a little before the men; and this is why the Colonel said a few days later, that some one had been putting the fear of God into the Wuddars. As he was the only person officially entitled to do this, it distressed him to see such unanimous virtue. "It's too good to last," he said. "I only wish I could find out what the little devils mean."

The explanation, as it seemed to him, came at the change of the moon, when he received orders to hold himself in readiness to "allay any possible excitement" among the Satpura Bhils, who were, to put it mildly, uneasy because a paternal Government had sent up against them one Mahratta State-educated vaccinator, with lancets, lymph, and an officially registered calf. In the language of State they had "manifested a strong objection to all prophylactic measures" had "forcibly detained the vaccinator," and "were on the point of neglecting or evading their tribal obligations."

"That means they are in a blue funk—same as they were at census time,' said the

Colonel," and if we stampede them into the hills we'll never catch 'em, in the first place, and in the second they'll whoop off plundering till further orders. 'Wonder who the God-forsaken idiot is who is trying to vaccinate a Bhil. I *knew* trouble was coming. One good thing is they'll only use local corps, and we can knock up something we'll call a campaign and let them down easy. Fancy us potting our best beaters because they don't want to be vaccinated! They're only crazy with fear."

"Don't you think, sir," said Chinn the next day, "that, perhaps, you could give me a fortnight's shooting-leave?"

"Desertion in the face of the enemy, by Jove!" The Colonel laughed. "I might, but I'd have to antedate it a little, because we're warned for service, as you might say. However, we'll assume that you applied for leave three days ago, and are now well on your way south."

"I'd like to take Bukta with me."

"Of course, yes. I think that will be the best plan. You've some kind of hereditary influence with the little chaps, and they may listen to you when a glimpse of our uniforms would drive them wild. You've never been in that part of the world before, have you? Take care they don't send you to your family vault in your youth and innocence. I believe you'll be all right if you can get 'em to listen to you."

"I think so, sir; but if—if they should accidently put an—make asses of 'emselves—they might you know—I hope you'll represent that they were only frightened. There isn't an ounce of real vice in 'em, and I should never forgive myself if anyone of—of my name got them into trouble."

The Colonel nodded, but said nothing.

Chinn and Bukta departed at once. Bukta did not say that, ever since the official vaccinator had been dragged into the hills by indignant Bhils, runner after runner had skulked up to the lines, intreating with forehead in the dust, that Jan Chinn should come and explain this unknown horror that hung over his people.

The portent of the Clouded Tiger was now too clear. Let Jan Chinn comfort his own, for vain was the help of mortal man. Bukta toned down these beseechings to a simple request for Chinn's presence. Nothing would have pleased the old man better than a rough and tumble campaign against the Satpuras, whom he, as an "unmixed" Bhil, despised, but he had a duty to all his nation as Jan Chinn's interpreter; and he devoutly believed that forty plagues would fall on his village if he tampered with that obligation. Besides, Jan Chinn knew all things, and he rode the Clouded Tiger.

They covered thirty miles a day on foot and pony, raising the blue wall-like line of the Satpuras as swiftly as might be. Bukta was very silent.

They began the steep climbs little after noon, but it was near sunset ere they reached the stone platform clinging to the side of a rifted, jungle-covered hill, where Jan Chinn the First was laid, as he had desired, that he might overlook his people. All India is full of neglected graves that date from the beginning of the eighteenth century—tombs of forgotten colonels of corps long since disbanded; mates of East Indiamen who went on shooting expeditions and never came back; factors, agents; writers; and ensigns of the Honourable the East India Company by hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands. English folk forget quickly, but natives have long memories, and if a man has done good in his life it is remembered after his death. The weathered marble four-square tomb of Jan Chinn was hung with wild flowers and nuts, packets of wax and honey, bottles of native spirits and infamous cigars, with buffalo horns and plumes of dried grass. At one end was a rude clay image of a white man, in the old-fashioned top-hat, riding on a bloated tiger.

Bukta salaamed reverently as they approached. Chinn bared his head and began to pick out the blurred inscription. So far as he could read it ran thus—word for word, and letter for letter:

To the memory of JOHN CHINN, ESQ
Late Collector of . . .
. . . ithout Bloodshed or . . . error of Authority
Employ . . . only . . . eans of Conciliat . . . and confiden . .
accomplished the . . . tire Subjection . . .
. . . a Lawless and Predatory People . . .
. . . eaching them to . . . . . ish Government . . .
by a Conquest over . . . Minds . . .
The most perm . . . and rational Mode of Domin . .
. . . Governor General and Counc . . . engal . . .
have ordered th . . . . . erected . . .
. . . arted this Life Aug. 19, 1844. Ag . . .

On the other side of the grave were ancient

At one end was a rude clay image of a white man, in the old-fashioned top-hat, riding on a bloated tiger

verses, also very worn. As much as Chinn could decipher said:

. . the savage band
Forsook their Haunts and b . . is Command
. . . . mended . . rals check a . . st for spoil
And . . ing Hamlets prove his gene . . . toil
Humanit . . survey . . . . ights restore
A Nation . ield . . subdued without a Sword

For some little time he leant on the tomb thinking of this dead man of his own blood, and of the house in Devonshire; then nodding to the plains: "Yes, it's a big work, all of it. Even my little share. He must have been worth knowing . . Bukta, where are my people?"

"Not here, Sahib. No man comes here except by full sun. They wait above. Let us climb and see."

But Chinn, remembering the first law of Oriental diplomacy, in an even voice answered: "I have come this far only because the Satpura folk are foolish, and dared not visit our lines. Now bid them wait on me *here*. I am not a servant, but a master of Bhils."

"I go—I go," clucked the old man. Night was falling, and at any moment Jan Chinn might whistle up his dreaded steed from the darkening scrub.

Now for the first time in a long life Bukta disobeyed a lawful command and deserted his leader; for he did not come back, but pressed to the flat table-top of the hill and called softly. Men stirred all about him; little trembling men with bows and arrows who had watched the two since noon.

"Where is he?" whispered one.

"At his own place. He bids you come," said Bukta.

"Now?"

"Now."

"Rather let him loose the Clouded Tiger upon us. We do not go."

"Nor I, though I bore him in my arms when he was a child in this his life. Wait here till the day."

"But surely he will be angry,"

"He will be very angry, for he has nothing to eat. But he has said to me many times that the Bhils are his children. By sunlight I believe this, but—by moonlight I am not so sure. What folly have ye Satpura pigs compassed that ye should need him at all?"

"One came to us in the name of the Government with little ghost-knives and a magic calf, meaning to turn us into cattle by

the cutting off of our arms. We were greatly afraid, but we did not kill the man. He is here; bound; a black man, and we think he comes from the West. He said it was an order to cut us all with knives—especially the women and the children. We did not hear that it was an order, so we were afraid, and kept to our hills. Some of our men have taken ponies and bullocks from the plains, and others pots and cloths, and earrings."

"Are any slain?"

"By our men? Not yet. But the young men are blown to and fro by many rumours like flames upon a hill. I sent runners asking for Jan Chinn lest worse should come to us. It was this fear that he foretold by the sign of the Clouded Tiger."

"He says it is otherwise," said Bukta, and he repeated with amplifications all that Young Chinn had told him at the conference of the wicker chair.

"Think you," said the questioner at last, "that the Government will lay hands on us?"

"Not I," Bukta rejoined. "Jan Chinn will give an order, and ye will obey. The rest is between the Government and Jan Chinn. I myself know something of the ghost-knives and the scratching. It is a charm against the Small-Pox, but how it is done I cannot tell. Nor need that concern you."

"If he stands by us and before the anger of the Government we will most strictly obey Jan Chinn, except—except we do not go down to that place to-night."

They could hear young Chinn below them shouting for Bukta, but they cowered and sat still, expecting the Clouded Tiger. The tomb had been holy ground for nearly half a century. If Jan Chin chose to sleep there, who had better right? but they would not come within eyeshot of the place till broad day.

At first Chinn was exceedingly angry, till it occurred to him that Bukta most probably had a reason (which, indeed, he had), and his own dignity might suffer if he yelled without answer. He propped himself against the foot of the grave, lit a cheroot, and, alternately dozing and smoking, came through the warm night proud that he was a lawful, legitimate fever-proof Chinn.

He prepared a plan of action much as his grandfather would have done; and when Bukta appeared in the morning with a most liberal supply of food, he said nothing of the scandalous desertion overnight. Bukta would have been relieved by any outburst of human anger, but Chinn finished his victual leisurely and a cheroot after, ere he made any sign.

"They are very much afraid," said Bukta, who was not too bold himself. "It remains only to give orders. They said they will obey if thou wilt only stand between them and the Government."

"That I know," said Chinn, strolling slowly to the table-land. A few of the elder men stood in an irregular semi-circle in an open glade; but the ruck of people—women and children—were hidden in the thicket. They had no desire to face the first anger of Jan Chinn the First.

Seating himself on a fragment of split rock, he smoked his second cheroot to the butt, hearing men breathe hard all about him. Then he cried, so suddenly that they jumped: "Bring the man that was bound!"

A scuffle and a cry were followed by the appearance of a Hindu vaccinator, quaking with fear, bound hand and foot, as the Bhils of old were accustomed to bind their human sacrifices. He was pushed cautiously before the presence, but young Chinn did not look at him.

"I said—the man that *was* bound. Is it a jest to bring me one tied like a buffalo? Since when could the Bhils bind folk at their pleasure? Cut!"

Half-a-dozen hasty knives cut away the thongs, and the man crawled to Chinn, who annexed his case of lancets and tubes of lymph. Then, sweeping the semi-circle with one comprehensive forefinger, and in the voice of compliment, he said, clearly and distinctly: "Pigs!"

"Ai!" whispered Bukta. "Now he speaks. Woe to foolish people!"

"I have come on foot from my house" (the assembly shuddered) "to make clear a matter which any other than a Satpura Bhil would have seen with both eyes from a distance. Ye know the Small-Pox, who pits and scars your

children so that they look like wasp-combs It is an order of the Government, that who so is scratched on the arm with these little knives which I hold up is charmed against Her All Sahiba are thus charmed, and very many Hindus. This is the mark of the charm. Look!"

He rolled back his sleeve to the armpit and showed the dimples of the vaccination mark on the white skin. "Come all, and look."

A few daring spirits came up and nodded their heads wisely. There was certainly a mark, and they knew well what other dread marks were hidden by the shirt. Merciful was Jan Chinn that he had not then and there proclaimed his godhead.

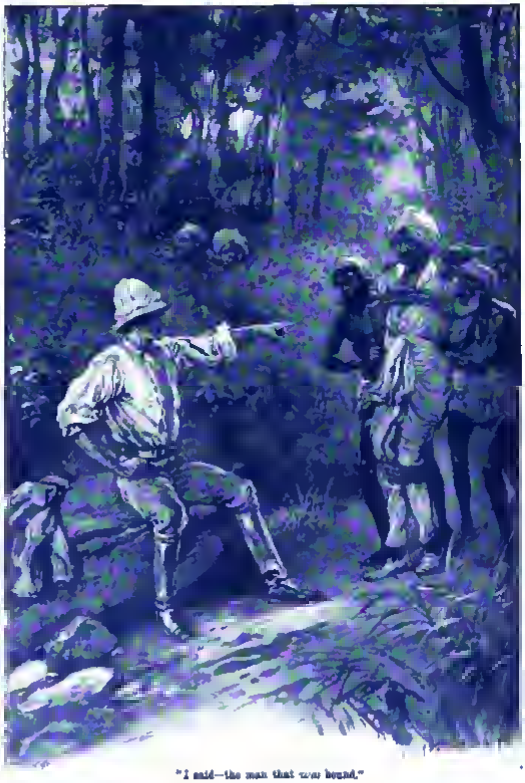
"Now all these things the man whom ye hound told you."

"I did—a hundred times, but they answered with blows," groaned the operator, chafing his wrists and ankles.

"But, being pigs, ye did not believe; and so I came here to save you first from Small-Pox, next from a great folly of fear, and lastly, it may be, from the rope and the gaol. It is no gain to me: it is no pleasure to me, but for the sake of that one who is yonder, who made the Bhil a man"—he pointed down the hill—"I, who am of his blood, the son of his son, come to turn your people: and I speak the truth, as did Jan Chinn."

The crowd murmured reverently, and men stole out of the thicket by twos and threes to join it. There was no anger in their god's face.

"There are my orders. (Heaven send they'll take 'em, but I seem to have impressed 'em so far!) I myself will stay among you while this man scratches your arms with the knives after the order of the Government. In three, or it may be five or seven days your arms will swell and itch and burn. That is the power of Small-Pox fighting in your base blood against the orders of the Government. I will therefore stay among you till I see that Small-Pox is conquered, and I will not go away till the men and the women and the little children



"I said—the man that was bound."

As soon as he was freed he dragged up a companion.

show me upon their arms such marks as I have even now showed you. I bring with me two very good guns and a man whose name is known both among beasts and men. We will hunt together, I and he, and your young men and the others shall eat and lie still. This is my order.'

There was a long pause while victory hung in the balance. A white-haired old sinner, standing on one uneasy leg, piped up:

'There are ponies, and some few bullocks and other things for which we need a *kowl* [protection]. They were *not* taken in the way of trade.'

The battle was won, and John Chinn drew a breath of relief. The young Bhils had been raiding, but if taken swiftly all could be put straight.

"I will write a *kowl* so soon as the ponies, the bullocks, and the other things are counted before me and sent back whence they came. But first we will put the Government mark on such as have not been visited by Small-Pox." In an undertone to the vaccinator: "If you show you are afraid you'll never see Poona again, my friend.'

"There is not sufficient supply of vaccine for all this population," said the man. "They have destroyed the official calf."

"They won't know the difference. Scrape 'em all round, and give me a couple of lancets. I'll attend to the elders."

The aged diplomat who had demanded protection was the first victim. He fell to Chinn's hand and dared not cry out. As soon as he was freed he dragged up a companion

and held him fast, and the crisis became, as it were, a child's game; for the vaccinated chased the unvaccinated to treatment, vowing that all the tribe must suffer equally. The women shrieked, and the children ran howling, but Chinn laughed and waved the pink-tipped lancet.

"It is an honour," he cried. "Tell them, Bukta, how great an honour it is that I myself should mark them. Nay, I cannot mark every one—the Hindu must also do his work—but I will touch all marks that he makes, so there will be an equal virtue in them can ask many cows for each maid to be wed."

And so on and so on, quick-poured showman's patter, sauced with Bhil hunting proverbs and tales of their own brand of coarse humour, till the lancets were blunted and both operators worn out.

But, nature being the same the world over, the unvaccinated grew jealous of their marked comrades, and came near to blows about it. Then Chinn declared himself a Court of Justice, no longer a medical board, and made formal inquiry into the late robberies.

When he read Chinn's note he laughed.

Thus do the Rajputs stick pigs. Ho, brother with one eye! Catch that girl and bring her to me. She need not run away yet, for she is not married, and I do not seek her in marriage. She will not come? Then she shall be shamed by her little brother, a fat boy, a bold boy. He puts out his arm like a soldier. Look! *He* does not flinch at the blood. Some day he shall be in my regiment. And now, mother of many, we will lightly touch thee, for Small-Pox has been before us here. It is a true thing indeed that this charm breaks the power of Mata. There will be no more pitted faces among the Satpuras, and so ye

"We are the thieves of Mahadeo," said the Bhils simply. "It is our fate and we were frightened. When we are frightened we always steal."

Simply and directly, as children, they gave in the tale of the plunder, all but two bullocks and some spirits that had gone amissing (these Chinn promised to make good out of his own pocket), and ten ringleaders were dispatched to the lowlands, with a wonderful document written on the leaf of a note-book, and addressed to the Assistant District Superintendent of Police. There was a licking in that note, as Jan Chinn warned

them, but anything was better than loss of liberty.

Armed with the protection the repentant raiders went downhill. They had no desire whatever to meet Mr. Dundas Fawne of the Police, aged twenty-two, and of a cheerful countenance, nor did they wish to revisit the scene of their robberies. Steering a middle course, they ran into the camp of the one Government chaplain allowed to the various Irregular Corps in a district of some fifteen thousand square miles, and stood before him in a cloud of dust. He was by way of being a priest they knew; and what was more to the point, a good sportsman, who paid his beaters generously.

When he read Chinn's note he laughed, which they deemed a lucky omen, till he called up two policemen, who tethered the ponies and the bullocks by the piled house gear, and laid stern hands upon three of that smiling band of the thieves of Mahadeo. The chaplain himself laid into them magisterially with a riding-whip. That was painful, but Jan Chinn had prophesied it. They submitted, but would not give up the written protection, fearing the gaol. On their way back they met Mr. D. Fawne, who had heard about the robberies, and was not pleased.

"Certainly," said the eldest of the gang, when the second interview was at an end, "certainly, Jan Chinn's protection has saved our liberty, but it is as though there were many beatings in one small piece of paper. Put it away."

One climbed into a tree and stuck the letter in a cleft forty feet from the ground, where it could do no harm. Warmed, sore, but happy, the ten returned to Jan Chinn next day, where he sat among uneasy Bhils, all looking at their right arms, and all bound under terror of their god's disfavour not to scratch.

"It was a good *kowl*," said the leader. "First the chaplain, who laughed, took away our plunder, and beat three of us, as was promised. Next, we meet Fawne Sahib, who frowned, and asked for the plunder. We spoke the truth, and so he beat us all one after another, and called us chosen names. He then gave us these two bundles," they set down a bottle of whisky and a box of cheroots, "and we came away. The *kowl* is left in a tree, because its virtue is that so soon as we show it to Sahib we are beaten."

"But for that *kowl*," said Jan Chinn sternly, "ye would all have been marching to gaol with a policeman on either side. Ye come now to serve as beaters for me. These people are unhappy, and we will go hunting till they are well. To-night we will make a feast."

It is written in the chronicles of the Satpura Bhils, together with many other matters not fit for print, that through five days, Jan Chinn the First hunted for his people after the day that he had put his mark upon them; and on the five nights of those days the tribe was gloriously and entirely drunk. Jan Chinn bought country spirits of an awful strength and slew wild pig and deer beyond counting, so that if any fell sick they might have two good reasons.

Between head and stomach aches they found no time to think of their arms, but followed Jan Chinn obediently through the jungles, and with each day's returning confidence men, women, and children, stole away to their villages as the little army passed by. They carried news that it was good and right to be scratched with ghost-knives; that Jan Chinn was indeed reincarnated as a god of free food and drink, and that of all nations the Satpura Bhils stood first in his favour, if they only would refrain from scratching. Henceforward that kindly demi-god would be connected in their minds with great gorgings and the vaccine and lancets of a paternal Government.

"And to-morrow I go back to my home," said Jan Chinn to his faithful few, whom neither spirits, over-eating, nor swollen glands could conquer. It is hard for children and savages to behave reverently at all times to the idols of their make-belief, and they had frolicked excessively with Jan Chinn. But the reference to his home cast a gloom on the people.

"And the Sahib will not come again," said he who had been vaccinated first.

"That is to be seen," said Chinn warily.

"Nay, but come as a white man—come as a young man whom we know and love, for as thou alone knowest we are a weak people

If we again saw thy—thy horse—" They were picking up their courage.

"I have no horse. I came on foot—with Bukta, yonder. What is this?"

"Thou knowest — the thing that thou hast chosen for a night-horse." The little men squirmed in fear and awe.

"Night-horses? Bukta, what is this last tale of my children?"

Bukta had been a silent leader in Chinn's presence, since the night of his desertion, and was grateful for a chance-flung question.

"They know, Sahib, he whispered. "It is the Clouded Tiger. That that comes from the place where thou didst once sleep. It is thy horse—as it has been these three generations."

"My horse! That was a dream of the Bhils."

"It is no dream. Do dreams leave the tracks of broad pugs on earth? Why make two faces before thy people. They know of the night-rulings, and they—and they—"

"Are afraid and would have them cease."

Bukta nodded. "If thou hast no further need of him. He is *thy* horse."

"The thing leaves a trail then?" said Chinn.

"We have seen it. It is like a village-road under the tomb."

"Can ye find and follow it for me?"

"By daylight—if one comes with us, and above all stands near by."

"I will stand close, and we will see to it that Jan Chinn does not rule any more."

And the Bhils shouted the last word again and again.

From Chinn's point of view the stalk was nothing more than an ordinary one—down hill, through split and crannied rocks, unsafe perhaps if a man did not keep his wits by him but no worse than twenty others he had undertaken. Yet his men—they refused absolutely to beat and would only trail—dripped sweat at every move. They showed the marks of enormous pugs that ran, always down hill, to a few hundred feet below Jan Chinn's tomb, and disappeared in a narrow-mouthed cave. It was an insolently open road, a domestic highway beaten without thought of concealment.

The white helmet in the sunlight annoyed him.

"The beggar might be paying rent and taxes," Chinn muttered ere he asked whether his friend's taste ran to cattle or man.

"Cattle," was the answer. "Two heifers a week. We drive them for him at the foot of the hill. It is his custom. If we did not he might seek us."

"Blackmail and piracy, said Chinn. "I can't say I fancy going into the cave after him. What's to be done?"

The Bhils fell back as Chinn lodged himself behind a rock with his rifle ready. Tigers he knew were shy beasts but one who had been long cattle-fed in this sumptuous style might prove overbold.

"He speaks!" someone whispered from the rear. "He knows too."

"Well of *all* the infernal cheek!" said Chinn. There was an angry growl from the cave—a direct challenge.

"Come on then," Chinn shouted. "Come out of that. Let's have a look at you."

The brute knew well enough that there was some connection between brown nude Bhils and his weekly allowance, but the white helmet in the sunlight annoyed him; and he did not approve of the voice that broke his rest. Lazily as a gorged snake he dragged himself out of the cave, and stood yawning and blinking at the entrance. The sunlight fell upon his flat right side and Chinn wondered. Never had he seen a tiger marked after this fashion. Except for his head, which was staringly barred, he was dappled—not striped, but dappled like a child's rocking-horse in rich shades of smoky black on red gold. That portion of his belly and throat which should have been white were orange; and his tail and paws were black.

He looked leisurely for some ten seconds and then deliberately lowered his head, his chin dropped and drawn in, staring intently at the man. The effect of this was to throw forward the round arch of his skull with two broad bands across it, while below the hands glared the unwinking eyes; so that head on, as he stood, he looked something like a diabolically scowling pantomime mask. It was a piece of natural mesmerism that he had practised many times on his quarry, and though Chinn was by no means a terrified buffer, he stood for an little held by the extraordinary nobility of the attack. The head—the body seemed to have been picked away behind it—the ferocious skull-like head crept nearer to the switching of an angry tail-tip in the grass. Left and right the Bhils had scattered to let John Chinn subdue his horse.

"My word!" he thought. "He's trying to frighten me like a hoger," and held between the saucer-like eyes leaping aside upon the shot. He feared he had left it too long.

A big coughing mass, reeking of cornmonkey past him up the hill and he followed discreetly. The tiger made no attempt to turn into the jungle; he was hunting for sight and breath, nose up, mouth open—the treacherous fore-legs scattering the gravel in sprits.

"Snippered!" said John Chinn watching the flight. "Now if he was a partridge he'd lower. Lungs must be full of blood."

The brute had jerked himself over a boulder and fallen out of sight the other side. John Chinn looked over with a ready barrel. But the red trail led straight as an arrow even to his grandfather's tomb and there, among the smashed spirit-bottles and the fragments of the mud image the life left with a flurry and a grunt.

"If my worthy ancestor could see that," said John Chinn, "he'd have been proud of me. Eyes, lower jaw, and lungs. A very nice shot." He whistled for Bukta as he drew the tape over the stiffening bulk.

"Ten—six—eight—by Jove! It's nearly eleven—call it eleven." Fore-arm inches four—hind seven and a half. A short tail—only three feet nine. But *what* a skin! Oh Bukta! Bukta!" He met with the knives with it.

"Is he behind question dead?" said an awe-stricken voice behind a rock.

"That was not the man I killed my first tiger," said Chinn. "I did not think that Bukta would run. I had no second gun."

"It—it is the Clonded Tiger," said Bukta unheeding the taunt. "He is dead."

Whether all the Bhils vaccinated and unvaccinated, of the Satpuras had had to see the kill Chinn could not say; but the whole hill's flank rustled with little men shouting, singing, and stamping. And yet till he had made the first cut in the splendid skin not a man would take a knife and when the shoulders fell the rim from the rejoicing mouth and no persuasion would bring them back till dawn. So Chinn spent a second night in the open guarding the carcase from jackals and thinking about his ancestor.

He returned to the lowlands to the triumphal chant of an escorting army three hundred strong, the Mahrana vaccinator at his elbow and the rueful dried skin as trophy before him. When that army suddenly and mysteriously disappeared as quail in high corn, he argued he was near civilization and a turn in the road brought him upon the camp of a wing of his own corps. He left the skin on a cart-tail for all the world to see and sought the Colonel.

"They're perfectly right," he explained earnestly. "There isn't an ounce of vice in 'em. They were only frightened. I've vaccinated the whole boiling, and they like it awfully. What are—what are we doing here, sir?"

"That's what I'm trying to find out," said the Colonel. "I don't know yet whether we're a piece of a brigade or a police force. However, I think we'll call ourselves a police force. How did you manage to get a Bhil vaccinated?"

"Well, sir," said Chinn, "I've been thinking it over, and, as far as I can make out, I've got a sort of hereditary pull over 'em."

"So I know, or I wouldn't have sent you; but *what* exactly?"

"It's rather rummy. Down here, of course, I'm a subaltern and all the rest of it, but up there it seems I'm my own grandfather reincarnated, and I've been disturbing the peace of the country by ruling a pad-tiger of nights. If I hadn't done that I don't think they'd have objected to the vaccination; but the two together were more than they could stand. And so, sir, I've vaccinated 'em and shot my tiger-horse as a sort o' proof of good faith. You never saw such a skin in your life."

The Colonel tugged his moustache thoughtfully. "Now how the deuce," said he, "am I to include that in my report?"

And, indeed, the official version of the Bhil's anti-vaccination stampede said nothing about Lieutenant John Chinn his godship. But Bukta knew, and the corps knew, and every Bhil in the Satpura Hills knew. The Clouded Tiger skin is on the wall of the Waddar's mess. Chinn took some trouble to hang it so that it can be seen through the open door by the curiously-minded. And now Bukta is zealous that John Chinn should swiftly be wedded and impart his powers to a son, for if the Chinn succession fails and the little Bhils are left to their own imaginings, there will be fresh trouble in the Satpuras.

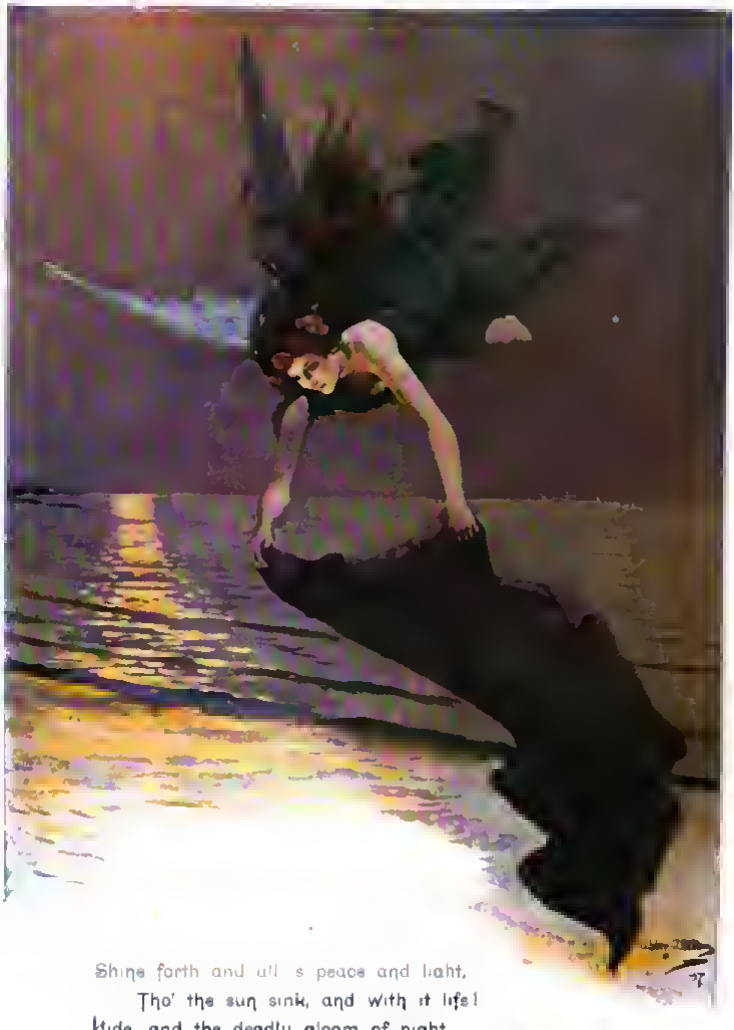
He returned to the lowlands to the triumphal chant of an escorting army

TO VENUS, THE EVENING STAR.

BY SIR LEWIS MORRIS.

A SONG.

Pale orb serene, that shinest still
Tho' youth be fled and springtime done,
And dreary autumn, dark and chill,
Obscure our brief day's waning sun,
Oh, Love, ah, radiant Star!



Shine forth and all peace and light,
Tho' the sun sink, and with it life!
Hide, and the deadly gloom of night
Descends with hate and wrong and strife,
Oh, Love, oh, radiant Star!

Not thine the garish glare of noon,
Nor fever-heats of wild desire,
Nor craters of the ghostly moon,
Silvered with dead phosphoric fire,
Oh, Love, oh, radiant Star!

But ever na ure with primrose flame,
Steadfast as warm glances are,
Thro' life's swift seasons still the same,
Light thou our heavenward path-way far!
Oh, Love, oh, radiant Star!

A VISION OF THE FLOOD.

By George Griffith.

"And they were destroyed from the Earth."—*Gen.* ix. 23

Softly on Shinar's verdant plain
The slanting sunbeams sleep,
And slowly o'er the western main
The crimson cloudlets sweep—
From vine-clad slope and leafy dell
The orisons of evening swell,
Half-blended—vaguely sweet
Through shimmering glade and dim green grove
The whispering youths and maidens rove
And lips of longing meet.

The purple twilight dimmer grows
And bright the young moon's crest,
And Hesperus yet brighter glows
Against the crimson West;
No breath disturbs the languorous air,
Nor mist nor cloud obscures save where
In circling columns rise
From many a sacred grove and bower
The blue-grey wreaths that tell the hour
Of evening sacrifice.

So, in the mingled gloom and light
The young world sinks to sleep
To dream away the summer night
Through slumbers calmly deep
All heedless of the warning given,
Or the impending wrath of heaven,
Unthinking of their doom,
Earth's first-born children lie at rest
On the All-Mother's ample breast—
Their cradle and their tomb!

Comes midnight—and the moon o'ercast
Sinks down the dome of night
Through mist and cloud-wrack gathering fast
Like squadrons to the fight.
One after one the star-beams fade,
Rank after rank all round arrayed
The shadowy legions form!
The night-wind fans the lips of Death,
And shuddering Nature holds her breath
And wans the coming storm

The hours flit by—cloud after cloud
Rolls up the darkening sky
Till 'neath one universal shroud
The sleeping myriads lie—
Then, with one flash the pall is riven
As the avenging sword of Heaven
Flames through the shattered gloom:
The Storm-God's legions downward sweep
And thunders roll from deep to deep
To sound the Hour of Doom

Now peal after peal through the night rings
the voice of the Angel of Death,
And flash after flash, swift and bright, streams
the flame of his withering breath;
Deep unto deep calls aloud in a chorus of
awful accord
And the crests of the mountains are bowed
at the sound of the voice of the Lord
And shrill through the gloom and the glare,
out-shrieking the scream of the blast
Rings the wild wail of the prayer for the
mercy whose moment has passed.
Swiftly the waters arise in their black,
irresistible might —
The roll of the thunder replies, and the
tempest sweeps on through the night.
Till vineyard and forest lie prone neath the
rush of the conquering surge,
And the voice of the waters alone is
chanting the dead Race's dirge.

Day after day—night after night—
The waters upward creep,
'Till but one solitary height
Towers o'er the shoreless deep.
High on its hoary summit stands
An altar reared by impious hands,
And stained with children's blood.
Last relic of the Vanished Race,
Unshaken yet it holds its place
Frowning athwart the flood.

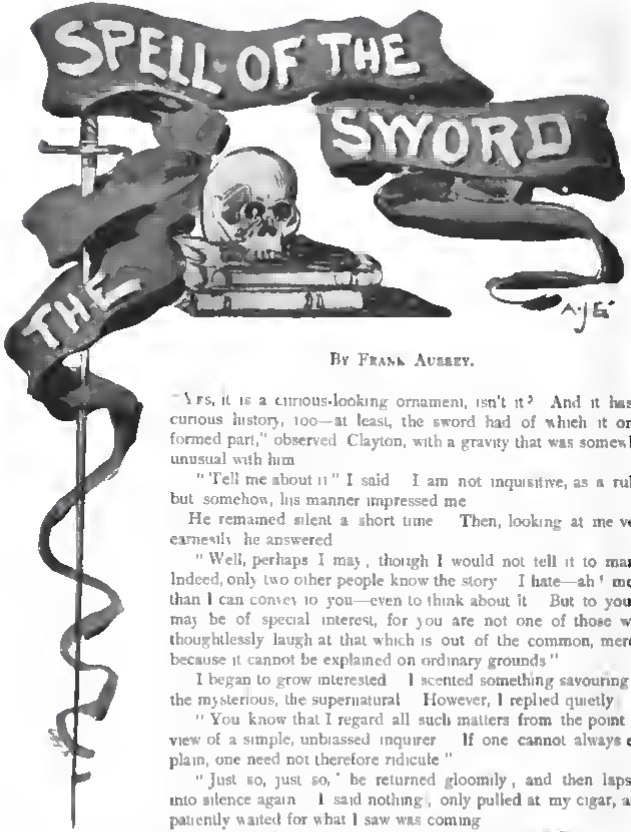
And stark beside that awful stone
A man and maiden stand,
'Mid the wide wilderness alone
On this last rood of land—
The maiden to her lover's side
Shrinks shuddering as the rising tide
Creeps closer round their tomb
But he with clear, undaunted eye
Untrembling scans the blackening sky,
Defiant of his doom

The hungry waters lick their feet
And lap the bloodstained stone
In one last kiss their white lips meet—
Then breaks a long-drawn groan
From out that stern man's fearless breast
As far down in the dim dun West
He sights the drifting Ark
"Lost lost—farewell sweet love!" he cries!
Have ye one lightning left, O skies?
Then smite ere these dark waters rise
And quench life's fading spark!"

Down through the firmament cleaving, flames
the white lightning once more;
Swiftly the billows upheaving answer the
thunder's fast roar.
Dead—with their arms still entwining slain
ere the waters could rise!
Dead—with the lovelight still shining through
the mist on their death-glazing eyes!
Low lie the lovers unparted, fast joined in the
wedlock of death,
Dead, yet in death still true-hearted to love
that but ceased with their breath!

And still the waters rise—the Altar-Stone,
Last monument of earth, now stands alone
Above the dark, illimitable wave
The night-veil falls, and o'er the evening
gloom
A deeper gloom descends—the Altar-tomb
Totters and falls where fell the Loving and
the Brave
The sullen flood rolls o'er the ruined Fane
The billows part once more, then close
again
O'er all now left of earth—a lovers' grave!

The morning dawns a flood of glory streams
From out the opening portals of the Day
And where far glancing, flame the brightest beams
The Ark drifts on her solitary way
On, on alone—none knowing whither bound,
With the wide waste of waters wailing round



By Frank Aubrey.

"Yes, it is a curious-looking ornament, isn't it? And it has a curious history, too—at least, the sword had of which it once formed part," observed Clayton, with a gravity that was somewhat unusual with him.

"Tell me about it!" I said. I am not inquisitive, as a rule; but somehow, his manner impressed me.

He remained silent a short time. Then, looking at me very earnestly, he answered:

"Well, perhaps I may, though I would not tell it to many. Indeed, only two other people know the story. I hate—ah! more than I can convey to you—even to think about it. But to you it may be of special interest, for you are not one of those who thoughtlessly laugh at that which is out of the common, merely because it cannot be explained on ordinary grounds."

I began to grow interested. I scented something savouring of the mysterious, the supernatural. However, I replied quietly:

"You know that I regard all such matters from the point of view of a simple, unbiassed inquirer. If one cannot always explain, one need not therefore ridicule."

"Just so, just so," he returned gloomily, and then lapsed into silence again. I said nothing, only pulled at my cigar, and patiently waited for what I saw was coming.

"Do you know — but no, of course you don't," he began presently. "But can you imagine, how it can be, that a man may suddenly, unexpectedly, once in his life, feel like a would-be murderer? You have heard of men in the east who suddenly run 'amok,' as it is called? Well—what would you say if I tell you that *I*—even *I*—who sit now so soberly before you, whom you know to be ordinarily, a quiet, peaceably-disposed English gentleman—had once been on the very verge of running 'amok'?"

"Temporary frenzy—a heat-stroke, probably," I suggested.

"You think so, *now*; but wait till you've heard my story. Then you'll be better able to judge." And he proceeded to unfold to me the following strange tale:

"When I said, just now, that I knew the history of the sword to which that curiously-

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wrought silver death's-head belonged, I meant only its history since it came into the hands of a friend of mine named Knebworth. I suspect that many other histories or stories—and terrible ones—attach to it, if we could but trace them. But what I have to tell is quite gruesome enough, and I have no wish to learn anything more about it.

"You have heard that I fought in the Brazilian civil war of some years back. My friend, Jack Knebworth, and myself, attached ourselves to the popular—and winning—party.

"We were given commissions, and fought almost side by side through nearly the whole term of the war.

"It was just before the close of the last campaign that I one day found Jack in possession of that sword. It had the most curiously worked hilt I ever saw; and that death's-head was fixed on to the end by a screw. You see, there are two emeralds in the eye-sockets of the skull. They are dull now, they seem, somehow, to have lost their lustre, but, I tell you, their brightness formerly was something little short of marvellous. I have been told they are not very valuable, being scarcely, I believe, strictly speaking, emeralds at all. Some other stones of a similar colour, perhaps. Anyway, they used to throw out greenish-yellow beams of so vivid and fiery a character that the thing made you sometimes jump when you looked at it. These beams, with the grinning jaws, gave the whole affair a most ghastly, yet strangely fascinating appearance—you almost thought it was alive, and was grinning and rolling its eyes at you!

"The rest of the hilt was curiously worked out with strange woods inlaid with silver, upon which were signs, or letters, or designs of which I could not guess the meaning. The blade was an old-fashioned rapier, of wonderfully tempered steel, and this also had on its four faces signs or characters which no one, however, professed to understand. There was a scabbard of leather, mounted with soft black velvet and silver; the latter with similar markings. It was probably of ancient Spanish manufacture, that was all we could guess at. Knebworth bought it of an Indian chief, we knew, who, one day, came into the camp, and offered it at a ridiculously low price. That was all he could tell about it at that time.

"Well, two or three days after he bought it, his servant, a staunch, trustworthy old soldier, who had served him faithfully, and fought bravely, all through the war, 'ran amok,' as they say in India—I don't know how else to describe the affair—killed two of his own comrades, and then threw himself over a bridge into a mountain torrent, where he was dashed to pieces on the rocks. In one of the victims he left this sword; and, after the inquiry, it was returned to Knebworth.

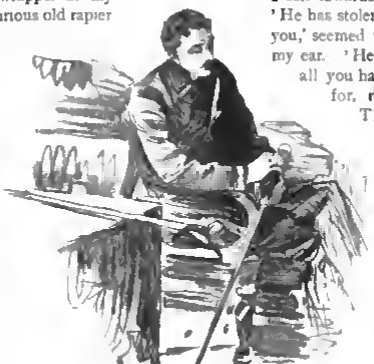
"Then came the peace; and we were moved into one of the towns. There Jack obtained another servant; one strongly recommended by a brother officer who was packing up to leave the country. Two days afterwards, this new servant disappeared; but, in one of the side streets, a man was found lying dead, with a wound through the heart; and, beside him, this sword! There was more fuss this time, and it was well for my chum that he could show a very clear and unassailable *alibi*. As it was, he had much trouble about the affair, and by the time it was over I was packing up and was nearly ready for my journey back to England. Knebworth was returning to the old country too, but not just then; he wished first to make a trip upon some matter of private business into the interior. He promised to follow me as soon as he could; and to look me up in London.

"Entering his room one day, I found him sitting on a packing-case with the sword lying across his knees. He told me he thought the thing was 'uncanny,' and that he was about to break it and throw the pieces away. After some talk I induced him to give it to me; I procured some sacking, and wrapped it up then and there, ready to pack in one of my chests. And that's how the thing came into my possession.

"I came back to England full of hope and expectations of happiness; for I was hastening to return to one I dearly loved, one who had long ago promised to be my wife. Her name was Mabel—Mabel Karslake—and she had been all the world to me for many long years. True, I had not heard from her of late, but I attributed that to the dis-

Bellingham, of the old sword that lay packed away in one of my chests, but which belonged, properly, to him. I decided I would give it back to him, and let him do with it what seemed good in his own eyes. I therefore opened the chest, and began pulling out the contents till I found it wrapped in the sacking in which I had tied it up.

"Amongst other things I discovered, before coming to it, were two fencing foils, which were very old friends; I had had them many years. I laid these on the floor, took out the sword, and went and sat down by the table to undo the wrapper at my leisure. Soon the curious old rapier was unfolded, and I drew it from its scabbard to see if it had rusted. I found it quite bright, and, then, as my glance fell upon the hilt and the death's-head, I gave a great start. 'Never have I seen in any stones such gleams of lurid light as those that danced, and sparkled, and darted from the two 'eyes' of that skull!' I say 'lurid,' for, at times, the stones seemed to changa to rubies and the scintillations took a blood red hue, changing quickly again to a glittering green.



"Never have I seen in any stones such gleams of lurid light."

"As I gazed, the baleful glare of those fiery eyes seemed to grow and grow in intensity, and the eyes themselves to increase in size, till I felt as though I were enduring the mocking gaze of a mighty demon; and, verily, I half expected each moment to see appear before me some appalling, devilish shape from the under world. I took hold of the hilt with a half-conscious determination to see whether the thing were really alive; and also, as I believe, with the vague wish to shut out the sight of the hideous skull and its rolling, leering eyes.

"As my hand closed upon it, I felt at once an odd tingling in the fingers, that was not, however, at all unpleasant. Gradually it increased, and crept up my arm, and it seemed to bring a sensation as of great strength and power. I began to brandish the weapon, and to make lunges at an imaginary foe, thinking how easy it would be to bear down his guard, or wear out his defence, with such nerve and vigour as had suddenly come into the muscles of my arm.

"Then my thoughts took a fresh turn. I thought of Bellingham, and, for the first time, I felt towards him a fierce anger. 'He has stolen your loved one from you,' seemed to be whispered into my ear. 'He has taken from you all you had worked for, striven for, risked your life for. There is, perhaps, treachery at the root of it all. Kill him, *kill him*, ALL HIM! Rid yourself and your loved one of him, then the road to happiness will be open before you.' And — God help me!—I listened to it all! I madly resolved I would kill my rival when he came in, and I knew that he might arrive at any moment.

"Meanwhile, the queer sensation grew till it had permeated my whole frame. I felt full of a rich, warm glow, that tingled and rushed through my veins like a fiery flood, and that seemed to give me the strength of a dozen men. Then I began to fancy I heard strange sounds—murmurings and voices, the room rocked and swayed, and one of its walls—that on my left—opened, and there, spread out before my eyes, I saw a wonderful scene. From the floor on which I stood I looked out on a wide tropical landscape—a great stretch of rolling pampas, that ended, in the distance, in a range of blue mountains.

"On each side, in long ranks, were numbers

"I looked from one to the other in ever-increasing wonder and awe."

of people of almost all nations, dressed in the strangest garbs—costumes, for the most part, of those who had been dead and gone, for hundreds and hundreds of years. Some were men in flowing robes of various hues and shapes—Moors, Saracens, Arabs; many were in flashing armour or coats of mail; while others, again, were like unto the Incas and the priests of ancient South America. Mingled with them were Spaniards, Portuguese, Indians of many tribes, and some, again, of later times, even a few were of to-day. Never, not even on the stage in wildest pantomime, have I seen such a motley throng.

"Those on the left were grim, hard-visaged beings who gazed at me with an expression that was half-friendly, half-mocking. Their looks however, filled me with aversion, for somehow, it was borne in on me that their friendliness was more to be dreaded than their most terrible enmity. They were nearly all men, though amongst them were a few women, and each held a sword—the exact counterpart of the one that was in my own hand! The figures on the right carried no swords; but here, each one showed some ghastly wound, apparently still fresh and bleeding. And there came upon me the knowledge that all these I saw before me were the forms of the wicked or unhappy beings who had fallen under the spell of the sword; those to the right being the victims, and those to the left their murderers.

"For a while we gazed at each other in silence, I looking from one to the other in ever-increasing wonder and awe. Then those that carried the swords, lifted them in the air towards me as in salute, and, at the same time, began a strange, wild singing or chanting, the words being sung first by a few, and then repeated by the remainder.

"'Hail! Brother of the Sword!' was chanted by the first singers.

"'Hail! Brother of the Sword!' came the response so deep-toned and sonorous that it resembled a great wave that travels from afar, and falls, with its deep diapason, as from some grand ocean of sound, thundering upon the shore, rather than the melody of human voices.

"'He is one of us!' was next chanted forth; and 'He is one of us!' came the deep response.

"But at this a great horror seized me, a feeling of loathing and repulsion of these weird figures. 'One of them? No! *That* I would never be!' And as these thoughts rushed through my mind, I tried fiercely to loose my grasp upon the fatal sword, and to cast it from me. But I could not, try as I would, I found myself utterly unable to let it go. And the figures before me, as though they read my thoughts and answered them, sang again, but this time there was a sound of mockery in their tones — 'He who takes up the sword cannot loose it! It is the Spell of the Sword!' And the words were repeated, as the others had been.

"Still, however, I strove, I wrestled and fought strenuously against the dread power that kept the sword in my hand. Seeing this, the figures, as by one accord, lifted their swords, and pointed to the wall of the rooms in front of me. As I turned in the direction thus indicated, the wall there opened also, and I seemed to see the Mall in St James's Park, and, walking towards me, my rival, Cyril Bellingham. He appeared to be looking at me; but I *knew* that, though he was *thinking* of me, he did not really see me. And, on his face, was an expression of such insolent triumph as stung me to fury again as I gazed. At once the voices chanted: 'He sees his enemy. He will kill him!'

"I saw Cyril Bellingham standing before me."

"But even as the sound of the response died away, the wall on my right hand opened, and there, gazing at me with a look of indescribable anguish and intreaty, I saw the face of Mabel—of my dear lost love.

"'Shall the one I loved—*and love still*—become a murderer?' it seemed to say. I almost heard the whisper from the loved lips; and it fired me with sudden strength and resolve to throw off the spell.

"'No! A thousand times No!' I cried resolutely. With my left hand I seized the blade, and, with a desperate effort, wrenched the hilt out of my right, and the sword fell with a clatter, on the floor. Then the voices burst out into mocking laughter.

"'He thinks to escape! But the Sword shall be turned against him!' they cried.

"But the sound grew dim, and soon died away in a low wail; the room rocked and swayed around and under me, the figures faded slowly from my sight, and the walls seemed to return to their places.

"Then, trembling, and feeling strangely weak, I went over to a side-board, poured out a glass of brandy, drank it off, and dropped into a large arm-chair that was near. There I must either have fainted or fallen asleep, for I remember nothing more till I seemed to wake up suddenly and saw Cyril Bellingham standing before me. He was looking at me with the same cynical, triumphant smile that had so exasperated me a short time before. But it vanished as he saw me rouse up; and in

its place came the usual look of apparent, cordial friendship.

"'Having forty winks, eh?' he said with a short laugh. 'What in the world are you doing with all these playthings scattered about?' He indicated the foils and the sword, and, picking up the latter, he laid it on the table.

"I watched the action in silence, and, until I saw him put the weapon down, I made no reply. Then I said I felt tired, and out of sorts, and supposed that I had fallen asleep.

"'I have something to tell you,' he went on, regarding me curiously. 'Mabel has been so good as to fix the happy day. We are to be married this day month. I want to know if you will be one of my groomsmen?'

"This was, I need not say, cruelly trying to me; but I still felt tired and listless, and only answered quietly:

"'Thank you, but I shall not be in London. I am going away with Jack Knebworth. He is coming here this afternoon to arrange about it.'

"'Ah! Mabel will be sorry,' he returned, but, I could see, with evident relief. Then he took up the sword, and began bending it with the point on the floor.

"Now, by that time, I had persuaded myself that I must have fallen asleep, and dreamed all that I have just told you. Therefore I did not trouble myself about his handling the thing. I rather welcomed it as a ready way of changing the conversation.

"'It's good steel,' he went on.

"I picked up one of the foils, and bent it as he was bending the sword.

"'Not better than this,' I said indifferently.

"'Ah, I remember those foils,' he replied. 'You and I had many a bout with them years ago, hadn't we? I think I used to be the better fencer in those days. I wonder if I am so still?'

"'I've learned more of fencing than I knew then, I told him. 'And in a hard school too—where either you or your antagonist has to "curl up," as the Americans call it, and—it was not I that went under as you can see,' I finished rather grimly.

"'H'm. Well that may be a good thing for you,' he answered musingly, 'because——'

"'Because what?' I asked, as he seemed to hesitate.

"'Because it's your only chance,' he exclaimed, suddenly springing up and lunging at me with the weapon he was holding. 'I mean to *kill* you!'

"It was fortunate for me that I held the foil in my hand, and still more fortunate that I was looking at him at the moment; otherwise the weapon would have passed through my heart. Something in his manner, however, had put me on the alert, and I parried the stroke.

"'Great Heavens, Bellingham! What on earth's the matter with you? What are you thinking of?' I cried. 'Are you suddenly mad?'

"'Aye,' he shouted, lunging again, 'mad for your life! And I mean to have it too, as you will soon find out!'

"Again I parried the thrust, and stepped back, looking at him in horror and astonishment. Then I saw that his eyes seemed to be blazing; he looked literally, unmistakably, a madman.

"Suddenly, the truth flashed upon me. What I had experienced had been no dream; it had all been true! And now *he* was under the spell of the sword, as I had been but a short time before!

"'For the love of heaven, Bellingham,' I gasped out, 'throw that accursed sword down. Why should you wish to kill me?'

"'Why?' he hissed out, making at me again, 'because I know that Mabel loves you still. She has never loved *me*. I told her lies about you—said you had a Creole wife and three children out in Brazil; showed her letters that made her believe it. And she *did* believe it—ha, ha! And became engaged to me. But I know she loves you all the time—and *that's* why I mean to kill you!'

"'Great God!' I burst out. 'You infernal scoundrel!' But—why do you tell me all this?'

"'Why do I tell you, fool?' he almost screamed. 'Because I mean to kill you. You will never leave this room alive! To-day I feel I have the strength of ten men—aye, of fifty! All your boasted swordsmanship will avail you nothing to-day, for I shall *kill* you. But I want you to die knowing

that, had you lived, you could have won back Mabel from me. As it *is*, you will die with the knowledge that she will be *mine*.

"He got all this out in incoherent gasps, attacking me fiercely the while; and I saw it was no time for reply or for bandying words. It was all I could do, in this one-sided encounter, to defend myself. As he had nothing to fear from my weapon, all the advantage, of course, lay on his side. He had no necessity to defend himself; all he needed to do was to try to pass my guards, or to tire me out.

"And when I remembered the feelings I had experienced while grasping that diabolical sword, my heart sank within me. I recalled the strange sensation of wonderful strength and vigour; my conviction that I could prevail against any, even the strongest, opponent. And now all that mysterious force and power were turned against myself—against *me*, when I had but a foil to defend myself with, and at the moment, too, when life seemed sweeter than ever it had before—when I knew that Mabel loved me!

"This thought nerved me to fight hard for my life; but it could not give me the advantage my antagonist held, nor equalise the chances. Still, I fought desperately. Round and round the studio—there was no table in the middle—to and fro—backwards and forwards, we went; sometimes stopping as by mutual consent, for a moment's breathing space, when we would stand and glare at one another like furious, watchful tigers. But, in the end, I knew my strength was gradually failing me. I felt a wild, mad despair creeping over me—the feeling of one struggling hopelessly in the toils and knowing he can, at best, only stave off death for a few moments longer.

"Twice, Bellingham, with a fierce, almost irresistible beat, nearly forced the foil out of my aching hand. I knew the end was near, I felt sick and staggered, when the door opened, and Jack Knebworth entered. He looked, in open-eyed astonishment, for a second, then, taking in the whole situation in that brief glance, he raised a heavy walking-stick he was carrying, and, with one slashing blow, knocked the sword out of Bellingham's hand. It was just in time; for Bellingham had seen him, and, expecting that he would interfere, evidently determined to finish me off first. He threw himself forward with his whole power, and, as his weapon was knocked up, he came on to the button of my foil with such force that it snapped off near the end, and the jagged blade entered his breast. He fell to the ground with a mad yell of disappointed fury, and then lay still, the blood flowing from the wound.

"He picked up the fatal sword, and broke it over his knee."

"I rested, panting, against the wall, and stared at Knebworth, who stared back at me.

"'Well!' he exclaimed, 'this is a pretty business, truly! Lucky for you I came in when I did.'

"'Lucky, indeed, old friend! Give me a drop of that brandy over there. Is he badly hurt—dead, do you think?'

"'What does it matter?' he returned coolly, as he poured out the brandy. 'The infernal, murdering villain! To set on, with

a sword, against a man armed only with a foil!'

"'Ah! there's worse than that at the bottom of it all,' I said savagely. 'Deceit, treachery, devilry! But I'll tell you another time. What's to be done now?'

"'Go for a doctor,' he said, 'and bring one as soon as you can; I'll see what I can do for him meanwhile. But first we'll have no more devil's tricks with this cursed plaything.' And, with that, he picked up the fatal sword, broke it into several parts over his knee, and threw all the pieces into the chest, shutting down the lid.

"'Now, remember,' he went on, looking meaningly at me, 'you were fencing in a friendly way, with those two foils, and there was an accident. I happened to see it, and can give all necessary explanations.'

"I gave him a nod of comprehension and assent, and hurried away for a medical man. Later on, Bellingham was carried, still unconscious, to the nearest hospital. His wound was a bad one, and for long it was not known whether he would live or die. In the end, however, he recovered, and went abroad.

"I took no steps against him but let him go. I felt too happy, and too well pleased with the world in general, for, by the time he was convalescent, Mabel and I were married.

"I unscrewed that death's-head from the hilt—handling it very gingerly the while, you may be sure—and, one day down at Brighton, Jack Knebworth and I threw all the rest of the weapon into the sea. We were determined that no other human creature should run even the faintest chance of coming under the influence of that terrible sword and its spell."

YOUR SONG.

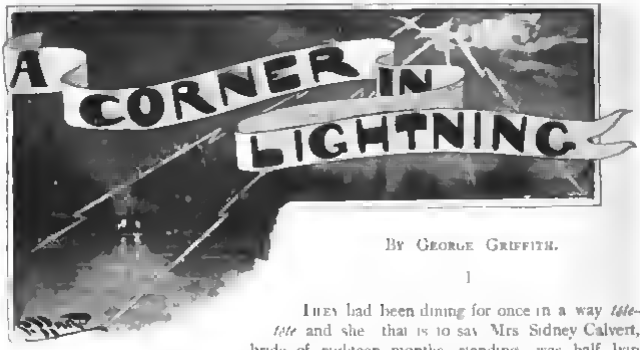
"Sweetest Song," I used to sigh,
And close mine eyes and listen;
And after look, and wonder why
Your lashes seemed to glisten.

Methought I loved the song it seemed
A very vision bringer;
And, lazy soul, I lay and dreamed
And never saw the singer.

Until one night another maid
Essayed its words so tender
Alack! I fear the things I said
Would grievously offend her.

For suddenly my slow heart knew
Too long it had been roving—
'Twas not the song, 'twas you! 'twas you!
My Sweet, I had been loving.

J. J. Bell.



By George Griffith.

I

They had been dining for once in a way *tête-à-tête* and she—that is to say Mrs Sidney Calvert, a bride of eighteen months' standing—was half lying, half sitting in the depths of a big, cosy, saddle-bag armchair on one side of a bright fire of mixed wood and coal that was burning in one of the most improved imitations of the mediæval fireplace. Her feet—very pretty little feet they were, too, and very daintily shod—were crossed, and poised on the heel of the right one at the corner of the black marble curb.

Dinner was over. The coffee service and the liqueur case were on the table, and Mr. Sidney Calvert, a well set-up young fellow of about thirty, with a handsome, good-humoured face which a close observer would have found curiously marred by a chilly glitter in the eyes and a hardness that was something more than firmness about the mouth, was walking up and down on the opposite side of the table smoking a cigarette.

Mrs Calvert had just emptied her coffee cup, and as she put it down on a little three-legged console table by her side, she looked round at her husband and said:

"Really, Sid, I must say that I can't see why you should do it. Of course it's a very splendid scheme and all that sort of thing, but, surely you, one of the richest men in London, are rich enough to do without it. I'm sure it's wrong, too. What should we think if somebody managed to bottle up the atmosphere and made us pay for every breath we drew? Besides, there must surely be a good deal of risk in deliberately disturbing the economy of Nature in such a way. How are you going to get to the Pole, too, to put up your works?"

"Well," he said, stopping for a moment in his walk and looking thoughtfully at the lighted end of his cigarette, "in the first place, as to the geography. I must remind you that the Magnetic Pole is not the North Pole. It is in Boothia Land, British North America, some 1500 miles south of the North Pole. Then as to the risk, of course one can't do big things like this without taking a certain amount of it, but still, I think it will be mostly other people that will have to take it in this case.

"Their risk, you see, will come in when they find that cables and telephones and telegraphs won't work, and that no amount of steam-engine grinding can get up a respectable amount of electric light—when in short, all the electric plant of the world loses its value, and can't be set going without buying supplies from the Magnetic Polar Storage Company, or, in other words, from your humble servant and the few friends that he will be graciously pleased to let in on the ground floor. But that is a risk that they can easily overcome by just paying for it. Besides, there's no reason why we shouldn't improve the quality of the commodity. 'Our Extra Special Refined Lightning' 'Our Triple Concentrated Essence of Electric Fluid' and 'Competent Thunder-Storms delivered at the Shortest Notice' would

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look very nice in advertisements, wouldn't they?"

"Don't you think that's rather a frivolous way of talking about a scheme which might end in ruining one of the most important industries in the world?" she said, laughing in spite of herself at the idea of delivering thunder-storms like pounds of butter or skeins of Berlin wool.

"Well, I'm afraid I can't argue that point with you because, you see, you will keep looking at me while you talk, and that isn't fair. Anyhow I'm equally sure that it would be quite impossible to run any business and make money out of it on the lines of the Sermon on the Mount. But, come, here's a convenient digression for both of us. That's the Professor, I expect."

"Shall I go?" she said, taking her feet off the fender.

"Certainly not, unless you wish to," he said, "or unless you think the scientific details are going to bore you."

"Oh, no, they won't do that," she said. "The Professor has such a perfectly charming way of putting them; and, besides, I want to know all that I can about it."

"Professor Kenyon, sir."

"Ah, good evening, Professor! So sorry you could not come to dinner." They both said this almost simultaneously as the man of science walked in.

"My wife and I were just discussing the ethics of this storage scheme when you came in," he went on. "Have you anything fresh to tell us about the practical aspects of it? I'm afraid she doesn't altogether approve of it, but as she is very anxious to hear all about it, I thought you wouldn't mind her making one of the audience."

"On the contrary, I shall be delighted," replied the Professor, "the more so as it will give me a sympathiser."

"I'm very glad to hear it," said Mrs. Calvert approvingly. "I think it will be a very wicked scheme if it succeeds, and a very foolish and expensive one if it fails."

"After which there is of course nothing more to be said," laughed her husband, "except for the Professor to give his dispassionate opinion."

"Oh, it shall be dispassionate, I can assure you," he replied, noticing a little emphasis on the word. "The ethics of the matter are no business of mine, nor have I anything to do with its commercial bearings. You have asked me merely to look at technical possibilities and scientific probabilities, and of course I don't propose to go beyond these."

He took another sip at a cup of coffee that Mrs. Calvert had handed him, and went on:

"I've had a long talk with Markovitch this afternoon, and I must confess that I never met a more ingenious man or one who knew as much about magnetism and electricity as he does. His theory that they are the celes-

"Really, Sid, I must say that I can't see why you should do it."

tial and terrestrial manifestations of the same force, and that what is popularly called electric fluid is developed only at the stage where they become one, is itself quite a stroke of genius, or, at least, it will be if the theory stands the test of experience. His idea of locating the storage works over the Magnetic Pole of the earth is another, and I am bound to confess that, after a very careful examination of his plans and designs, I am distinctly of opinion that, subject to one or two reservations, he will be able to do what he contemplates."

"And the reservations what are they?" asked Calvert a trifle eagerly.

"The first is one that it is absolutely necessary to make with regard to all untried schemes, and especially to such a gigantic one as this. Nature, you know, has a way of playing most unexpected pranks with people who take liberties with her. Just at the last moment, when you are on the verge of success, something that you confidently expect to happen doesn't happen, and there you are left in the lurch. It is utterly impossible to foresee anything of this kind, but you must clearly understand that if such a thing did happen it would ruin the enterprise just when you have spent the greatest part of the money on it—that is to say, at the end and not at the beginning."

"All right," said Calvert, "we'll take that risk. Now, what's the other reservation?"

"I was going to say something about the immense cost, but that I presume you are prepared for."

Calvert nodded, and he went on:

"Well, that point being disposed of, it remains to be said that it may be very dangerous—I mean to those who live on the spot, and will be actually engaged in the work."

"Then, I hope you won't think of going near the place, Sid!" interrupted Mrs. Calvert, with a very pretty assumption of wifely authority.

"We'll see about that later, little woman. It's early days yet to get frightened about possibilities. Well, Professor, what was it you were going to say? Any more warnings?"

Professor Kenyon.

The Professor's manner stiffened a little as he replied.

"Yes, it is a warning, Mr. Calvert. The fact is I feel bound to tell you that you propose to interfere very seriously with the distribution of one of the subtlest and least-known forces of Nature, and that the consequences of such an interference might be most disastrous, not only for those engaged in the work, but even the whole hemisphere, and possibly the whole planet.

"On the other hand, I think it is only fair to say that nothing more than a temporary disturbance may take place. You may, for instance, give us a series of very violent thunderstorms, with very heavy rains; or you may abolish thunderstorms and rain altogether until you get to work. Both prospects are within the bounds of possibility, and, at the same time, neither may come to anything."

"Well, I think that quite good enough to gamble on, Professor,' said Calvert, who was thoroughly fascinated by the grandeur and magnitude, to say nothing of the dazzling

financial aspects of the scheme. "I am very much obliged to you for putting it so clearly and nicely. Unless something very unexpected happens, we shall get to work on it at once. Just fancy what a glorious thing it will be to play Jove to the nations of the earth, and dole out lightning to them at so much a flash!"

"Well, I don't want to be ill-natured," said Mrs. Calvert, "but I must say that I hope the unexpected *will* happen. I think the whole thing is very wrong to begin with, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if you blew us all up, or struck us all dead with lightning, or even brought on the Day of Judgment before its time. I think I shall go to Australia while you're doing it."

II.

A little more than a year had passed since this after-dinner conversation in the dining-room of Mr. Sidney Calvert's London house. During that time the preparations for the great experiment had been swiftly but secretly carried out. Ship after ship loaded with machinery, fuel, and provisions, and carrying labourers and artificers to the number of some hundreds, had sailed away into the Atlantic, and had come back in ballast and with bare working crews on board of them. Mr. Calvert himself had disappeared and re-appeared two or three times, and on his return he had neither admitted nor denied any of the various rumours which gradually got into circulation in the City and in the Press.

Some said that it was an expedition to the Pole, and that the machinery consisted partly of improved ice-breakers and newly-invented steam sledges, which were to attack the ice-hummocks after the fashion of battering rams, and so gradually smooth a road to the Pole. To these little details others added flying machines and navigable balloons. Others again declared that the object was to plough out the North-West passage and keep a waterway clear from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific all the year round, and yet others, somewhat less imaginative, pinned their faith to the founding of a great astronomical and meteorological observatory at the nearest possible point to the Pole, one of the objects of which was to be the determination of the true nature of the Aurora Borealis and the Zodiacal Light.

It was this last hypothesis that Mr. Calvert favoured as far as he could be said to favour any. There was a vagueness, and, at the same time, a distinction about a great scientific expedition which made it possible for him to give a sort of qualified countenance to the rumours without committing himself to anything, but so well had all his precautions been taken that not even a suspicion of the true object of the expedition to Boothia Land had got outside the little circle of those who were in his confidence.

So far everything had gone as Orloff Markovitch, the Russian Pole to whose extraordinary genius the inception and working out of the gigantic project were due, had expected and predicted. He himself was in supreme control of the unique and costly works which had grown up under his constant supervision on that lonely and desolate spot in the far North where the magnetic needle points straight down to the centre of the planet.

Professor Kenyon had paid a couple of visits with Calvert, once at the beginning of the work and once when it was nearing completion. So far not the slightest hitch or accident had occurred, and nothing abnormal had been noticed in connection with the earth's electrical phenomena save unusually frequent appearances of the Aurora Borealis, and a singular decrease in the deviation of the mariner's compass. Nevertheless, the Professor had firmly but politely refused to remain until the gigantic apparatus was set to work, and Calvert, too, had, with extreme reluctance, yielded to his wife's intreaties, and had come back to England about a month before the initial experiment was to be begun.

The twentieth of March, which was the day fixed for the commencement of operations, came and went, to Mrs. Calvert's intense relief, without anything out of the common happening. Though she knew that over a hundred thousand pounds of her husband's money had been sunk, she found it impossible not to feel a thrill of satisfaction in the hope that Markovitch had made his experiment and failed.

She knew that the great Calvert Company, which was practically himself, could very well afford it, and she would not have regretted the loss of three times the sum in exchange for the knowledge that Nature was to be allowed to dispose of her electrical forces as seemed good to her. As for her husband, he went about his business as usual, only displaying slight signs of suppressed excitement and anticipation now and then, as the weeks went by and nothing happened.

She had not carried out her threat of going to Australia. She had, however, escaped from the rigours of the English spring to a villa near Nice, where she was awaiting the arrival of her second baby, an event which she had found very useful in persuading her husband to stop away from the Magnetic Pole. Calvert himself was so busy with what might be called the home details of the scheme that he had to spend the greater part of his time in London, and could only run over to Nice now and then.

It so happened that Miss Calvert put in an appearance a few days before she was expected, and therefore while her father was still in London. Her mother very naturally sent her maid with a telegram to inform him of the fact and ask him to come over at once. In about half-an-hour the maid came back with the form in her hand bringing a message from the telegraph office that, in consequence of some extraordinary accident, the wires had almost ceased to work properly and that no messages could be got through distinctly.

In the rapture of her new motherhood Kate Calvert had forgotten all about the great Storage Scheme, so she sent the maid back again with the request that the message should be sent off as soon as possible. Two hours later she sent again to ask if it had gone, and the reply came back that the wires had ceased working altogether and that no electrical communication by telegraph or telephone was for the present possible.

Then a terrible fear came to her. The experiment had been a success after all, and Markovitch's mysterious engines had been all this time imperceptibly draining the earth of its electric fluid and storing it up in the vast accumulators which would only yield it back again at the bidding of the Trust which was controlled by her husband! Still she was a sensible little woman, and after the first shock she managed, for her baby's sake, to put the fear out of her mind, at any rate until her husband came. He would be with her in a day or two, and, perhaps, after all, it was only some strange but perfectly natural occurrence which Nature herself would set right in a few hours.

When it got dusk that night, and the electric lights were turned on, it was noticed that they gave an unusually dim and wevering light. The engines were worked to their highest power, and the lines were carefully examined. Nothing could be found wrong with them, but the lights refused to behave as usual, and the most extraordinary feature of the phenomenon was that exactly the same thing was happening in all the electrically lighted cities and towns in the northern hemisphere.

By midnight, too, telegraphic and telephonic communication north of the Equator had practically ceased, and the electricians of Europe and America were at their wits' ends to discover any reason for this unheard of disaster, for such in sober truth it would be unless the apparently suspended force quickly resumed action on its own account. The next morning it was found that, so far as all the marvels of electrical science were concerned, the world had gone back a hundred years.

Then people began to awake to the magnitude of the catastrophe that had befallen the world. Civilised mankind had been suddenly deprived of the services of an obedient slave which it had come to look upon as indispensable.

But there was something even more serious than this to come. Observers in various parts of the hemisphere remembered that there hadn't been a thunder-storm anywhere for some weeks. Even the regions most frequently visited by them had had none. A most remarkable drought had also set in almost universally. A strange sickness, beginning with physical lassitude and depression of spirits which confounded the best medical science of the world was manifesting itself far and wide, and rapidly assuming the proportions of a gigantic epidemic.

In the physical world, too, metals were found to be afflicted with the same incomprehensible disease. Machinery of all sorts got "sick," to use a technical expression, and absolutely refused to act, and forges and foundries everywhere came to a standstill for the simple reason that metals seemed to have lost their best properties, and could no longer be utilised as they had been. Railway accidents and breakdowns on steamers, too, became matters of every day occurrence, for metals and driving wheels, piston rods and propeller shafts, had acquired an incomprehensible brittleness which only began to be understood when it was discovered that the electrical properties which iron and steel had formerly possessed had almost entirely disappeared.

"Haltar! Read that!" he said.

So far Calvert had not wavered in his determination to make, as he thought, a colossal amount of money by his usurpation of one of the functions of Nature. To him the calamities which, it must be confessed, he had deliberately brought upon the world were only so many arguments for the ultimate success of the stupendous scheme. They were proof positive to the world, or at least they very soon would be, that the Calvert Storage Trust really did control the electricity of the Northern Hemisphere. From the Southern nothing had yet been heard beyond the news that the cables had ceased working.

Hence, as soon as he had demonstrated his power to restore matters to their normal condition, it was obvious that the world would have to pay his price under penalty of having the supply cut off again.

It was now getting towards the end of May. On the 1st of June, according to arrangement, Markovitch would stop his engines and permit the vast accumulation of electric fluid in his storage batteries to flow back into its accustomed channels. Then the Trust would issue its prospectus, setting forth the terms upon which it was prepared to permit the nations to enjoy that gift of Nature whose priceless ness the Trust had proved by demonstrating its own ability to corner it.

On the evening of May 25th Calvert was sitting in his sumptuous office in Victoria Street, writing by the light of a dozen wax candles in silver candelabra. He had just finished a letter to his wife, telling her to keep up her spirits and fear nothing, that in a few days the experiment would be over and everything restored to its former condition, shortly after which she would be the wife of a man who would soon be able to buy up all the other millionaires in the world.

As he put the letter into the envelope there was a knock at the door, and Professor Kenyon was announced. Calvert greeted him stiffly and coldly, for he more than half guessed the errand he had come on. There had been two or three heated discussions between them of late, and Calvert knew before the Professor opened his lips that he had come to tell him that he was about to fulfil a threat that he had made a few days before. And this the Professor did tell him in a few dry, quiet words.

"It's no use, Professor," he replied, "you know yourself that I am powerless, as powerless as you are. I have no means of communicating with Markovitch, and the work cannot be stopped until the appointed time."

"But you were warned, sir!" the Professor interrupted warmly. "You were warned, and when you saw the effects coming you might have stopped. I wish to goodness that I had had nothing to do with the infernal business, for infernal it really is. Who are you that you should usurp one of the functions of the Almighty, for it is nothing less than that? I have kept your criminal secret too long, and I will keep it no longer. You have made yourself the enemy of Society, and Society still has the power to deal with you——"

"My dear Professor, that's all nonsense, and you know it!" said Calvert, interrupting him with a contemptuous gesture. "If Society were to lock me up, it should do without electricity till I were free. If it hung me it would get none, except on Markovitch's terms which would be higher than mine. So you can tell your story whenever you please. Meanwhile you'll excuse me if I remind you that I am rather busy."

Just as the Professor was about to take his leave the door opened and a boy brought in an envelope deeply edged with black. Calvert turned white to the lips and his hand trembled as he took it and opened it. It was in his wife's handwriting, and was dated five days before, as most of the journey had to be made on horseback. He read it through with fixed, staring eyes, then he crushed it into his pocket and strode towards the telephone. He rang the bell furiously, and then he started back with an oath on his lips, remembering that he had made it useless. The sound of the bell brought a clerk into the room immediately.

"The whole works suddenly burst into white flame."

"Get me a hansom at once!" he almost shouted, and the clerk vanished.

"What is the matter? Where are you going?" asked the Professor.

"Matter? Read that!" he said, thrusting the crumpled letter into his hand. "My little girl is dead — dead of that accursed sickness which, as you justly say, I have brought on the world, and my wife is down with it, too, and may be dead by this time. That letter's five days old. My God, what have I done? What can I do? I'd give fifty thousand pounds to get a telegram to Markovitch. Curse him and his infernal scheme! If she dies I'll go to Boothia Land and kill him! Hullo! What's that? Lightning — by all that's holy — and thunder!"

As he spoke such a flash of lightning as

had never split the skies of London before flared in a huge ragged stream of flame across the zenith, and a roar of thunder such as London's ears had never heard shook every house in the vast city to its foundation. Another and another followed in rapid succession, and all through the night and well into the next day there raged, as it was afterwards found, almost all over the whole Northern hemisphere, such a thunderstorm as had never been known in the world before and never would be again.

With it, too, came hurricanes and cyclones and deluges of rain; and when, after raging for nearly twenty-four hours, it at length ceased convulsing the atmosphere and growled itself away into silence, the first fact that came out of the chaos and desolation that it had left behind it was that the normal electrical conditions of the world had been restored—after which mankind set itself to repair the damage done by the cataclysm and went about its business in the usual way.

The epidemic vanished instantly and Mrs. Calvert did not die. Nearly six months later a white-haired wreck of a man crawled into her husband's office and said feebly

"Don't you know me, Mr. Calvert? I'm Markovitch, or what there is left of him."

"Good heavens, so you are!" said Calvert. "What has happened to you? Sit down and tell me all about it."

"It is not a long story," said Markovitch, sitting down and beginning to speak in a thin, trembling voice. "It is not long, but it is very bad. Everything went well at first. All succeeded as I said it would and then, I think it was just four days before we should have stopped, it happened."

"What happened?"

"I don't know. We must have gone too far, or by some means an accidental discharge must have taken place. The whole works suddenly burst into white flame. Everything made of metal melted like tallow. Every man in the works died instantly, burnt, you know, to a cinder. I was four or five miles away, with some others, seal shooting. We were all struck down insensible. When I came to myself I found I was the only one alive. Yes, Mr. Calvert, I am the only man that has returned from Boothia alive. The works are gone. There are only some heaps of melted metal lying about on the ice. After that I don't know what happened. I must have gone mad. It was enough to make a man mad, you know. But some Indians and Eskimos, who used to trade with us, found me wandering about, so they told me, starving and out of my mind, and they took me to the coast. There I got better and then was picked up by a whaler and so I got home. That is all. It was very awful, wasn't it?"

Then his face fell forward into his trembling hands, and Calvert saw the tears trickling between his fingers. Then he reeled backward, and suddenly his body slipped gently out of the chair and on to the floor. When Calvert tried to pick him up he was dead. And so the secret of the Great Experiment, so far as the world at large was concerned, never got beyond the walls of Mr. Sidney Calvert's cosy dining-room after all.

Then he reeled backward.

CHINESE FAIRY TALES

FOR YOUNG AND OLD

By Annis Lennoys

INTRODUCTION

These tales were told long ago—nobody knows who first told them. Before the Egyptian king found the first Cinderella, little boys and girls in China knew all these fairy stories! But though nobody knows how old these tales are, I can tell you how long ago it is since the first one was told in English. Just eleven years ago, by the water tank in a Chinese garden, Mrs. Mena ling, a little Chinese wife of ten years old, tried to tell her English friend the tale of "The Water of Life and the Spirit Indri." You would have laughed at her funny English!

One morning afterwards because she wanted to please me, Mrs. Mena ling told me the other tales. What a queer little object she looked! Only ten years old, and obliged to wear many jewels, and a dress so worked with gold thread and embroidery that it rustled and creaked when she moved. Her hair was dressed in a sort of bow—jewelled pins kept it fastened; she had painted lips and teeth, gilt finger-nails, and tiny, crushed stumps of feet she could not walk on. It made me feel sad to look at her. Yet she was considered a very lucky little dame!

No. 1—THE WATER OF LIFE AND THE SPIRIT INDRI

In a valley of the Shan States where dwell strange people, Indri also had his home. He had black hands and feet and a black heart; for the rest he was like a goat. Yet could no man kill him; for by his doorway ran the stream whose waters preserve the life of him who drinks. And Indri knew this, and he was the owner of the water.

The people who lived near him envied him the possession of it. But it was no good their trying to steal away Indri's treasure, for whoever drank it without leave from Indri obtained a bad illness for his reward, instead of life and health.

So Indri dwelt alone in a little hut in the heart of a forest dense and dark. In this forest there were some beautiful orchids. Indri loved flowers, and he had wreathed the trunks of the gloomy pines with rare and wonderful blossoms. Every day he watered them with the Water of Life, and so they never faded.

Now there was a path through the forest, and Indri allowed people to walk there, provided they did not pick his orchids. For, in every bloom one drop of the Water of Life was sure to be found, and Indri knew if they had the flower they would get the water too.

Indri often travelled through the province and sold water to the sick folk, and because he had power to make the water useless, no one ever dared to harm him.

When he was in his hut, rarely a day passed without bringing at least one or two who wanted to buy a little water. In this way Indri had grown very rich, and, although no one knew it, he had made himself another home full of beautiful things, hidden deep in the forest.

The forest Brownies had built it for him, and, in return, Indri allowed them to sleep in his orchid blooms. These Brownies were all the more willing to serve Indri because his

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mother was a fairy, she it was who gave him these big forests and that wonderful stream. But one day as Indri sat in his hut he began to think how ugly he was.

"What shall I do?" he cried aloud. "I am the unhappiest man in all the world. My Mother was indeed a beautiful river fairy; but what good is that to me when my form is that of my father, the toad."

Just then, he heard his mother's voice say: "My son, live for nine days and nights in sight of virtue, and your ugliness will disappear."

Indri was delighted to hear her say that. He thought a great man was sure to be virtuous. So off he went to the Mandarin of Tao-tsin, and for a large sum of money he got permission to stay there nine days and nights. Then he went joyfully home. But as he came up the forest path he found every orchid bloom had been gathered in his absence. He found also, on looking at himself, that he was as ugly as ever.

"I know who has done this," said Indri in a rage. "Wickedness, not virtue, is in the Yamen of Tao-tsin. I cried for help, and gave ample money. The Mandarin has served me ill; he has robbed me of good water, but no more shall he or his people obtain."

With their burning feet they danced all over the rice fields.

That very night the Brownies planted the thorny mimosa round the forest, and Indri watered it so plentifully with the magic water that by morning it had grown into a thick hedge as high as a house.

No longer could the people come up the forest path, and buy water. A huge gate barred the way, and the Brownies kept watch night and day.

For a time the people cared little for all this. The Mandarin had saved the drops in each orchid bloom, and the people bought of him. They were rather glad to have the water nearer at hand than before, but as the Mandarin's store grew less, and he began to charge more money, the people became angry.

And when he refused to sell them any more (having only a few drops left for himself), they reproached him with his greed, and began to plan some way of appeasing Indri. This was more easily desired than done.

While they were thinking, another misfortune came upon the people. You see, Indri's mother was very angry at the Mandarin's treatment of her son. And she found out that the farmers had built their houses foolishly, with no trees behind to keep away evil spirits.

Just as the rice was ripe, she told this to the King of All-Evil, and he was pleased!

Nothing would do but the Mandarin's head.

Living trees always frighten him away. When he knew there were none, he called together all his children, and came down with them to Tao-tsin. With their burning feet they danced all over the rice fields.

Oh! Indri was indeed revenged when they were gone, and the people wept over the scorched plains and spoiled rice-crops. The poor folk were nearly starving, so no wonder they cried. The Brownies laughed when they heard it.

"They know now how *we* cried when all our pretty orchids were stolen," they said. "Serve them right!"

After this, the Mandarin called together the principal townsfolk to help him decide what should be done. They chose three of their number to go to Indri and beg for mercy and ask him to give them a little water to preserve their lives.

When they reached Indri's gate, he kept them waiting for a long time before he answered them. His joy was great, for he thought: "Now I shall be able, perhaps, to do as my mother said!"

But when he looked over the gate, he pretended to be very angry. "You toads!" he cried. "Your Mandarin stole my water and my orchids; bring me his head, and I'll see if I can spare you some water, but don't dare come near me again unless you do bring it!"

Terribly frightened, the men hurried back to Tao-tsin, and, hastening to the Yamen, told the sad result of their journey. But the Mandarin listened calmly: he was brave, though he was greedy.

"Do not let my wife and children know about this," said he. "Let my wife think I am gone on a journey: she will forget me when she is tired of waiting for my return."

The men promised, and said they would go with him to Indri. For they did not dare kill the Mandarin themselves, and hoped that when Indri had him in his power he would at once give them the water.

It was night when they came back to the Yamen, and only the Mandarin had seen them; as they turned to retrace their steps the stars shone out, and all the town was silent.

That was indeed a sad journey. The men were grieved to part with their Mandarin, for though he was fond of money he was also just. The Mandarin himself could not but hope Indri would hear reason and let him go free. He took money and jewels with him, thinking he might perhaps bribe Indri.

Now, though the men and the Mandarin had stolen out so quietly, one pair of bright eyes had watched them start. Yua-nana, the Mandarin's daughter, had been awakened by their talk, and, listening, she heard of her father's terrible fate. She determined to follow, and try and save him. She roused her maid Si-ho, and together they hurried after the men, Si-ho supporting her mistress's faltering footsteps with her sturdy arm.

The streets were so empty that nobody noticed the women as they hurried along, keeping as much in the shadows as they could. When the men passed out of the city gate the women silently followed. At last, just about midnight, the men came to the grim forest gate. The two women, with frightened faces, crept up under the shady trees, and listened and watched, with tear-dimmed eyes, to see what would happen next.

"We have brought the Mandarin, O Indri!" they cried. "Give us water!"

"I asked for the Mandarin's head," said Indri, as he came to the gate. "Kill him, and I will give you what you want."

The Mandarin offered money, jewels, and even lands to Indri, if he would give the people water and let him go free, but Indri would not have them—nothing would do but the Mandarin's head.

"Kill me yourself, then," said the Mandarin.

"I am not an executioner," said Indri.

Then, seeing that further talk was of no use, the three men drew lots to decide which should do the cruel deed. In the meanwhile, the Mandarin wrote on his tablets a letter to his wife, telling one of the men to take it to her and say he had found it in the forest.

"She will think wild beasts have eaten me, then she will not guess my real fate," he said sorrowfully.

"Noble sir, I will do as you say," said the man.

"Now I am ready," said the Mandarin.

Indri opened the gate.

"Come inside," he said.

At the sound of Indri's voice, Yua-nana started forward.

"Father! Stop!" she cried. "Indri shall *not* have your head." And she threw her arms round her father.

The men stood and looked at one another in astonishment. Only poor Yua-nana's sobs broke the silence.

At last Indri said—

"Is she your child?"

"Yes," said the Mandarin. "Daughter, go home, be silent, and do not tell your mother what you have seen."

Yua-nana looked from her father to Indri with eyes full of tears.

"Sir," she said to Indri, "is there nothing I can do?"

Indri looked at her beautiful face, and a bright idea entered his head.

"Truly," he said, "there is a way."

"What is it?" they all exclaimed in their eagerness, pressing close up to the gate.

Then Indri turned to the Mandarin.

"See," said he, "I will make a bargain with you. Leave me your daughter and her maid for nine days and nights. Promise me not to attempt to take her away before that time, then I will forgive you. But the maids must come of their own free will, mind that. Make up your mind quickly. I must have the head, or the girl."

"If her maid goes with her, noble sir, no harm can happen," said one of the men.

But the little maid began to cry.

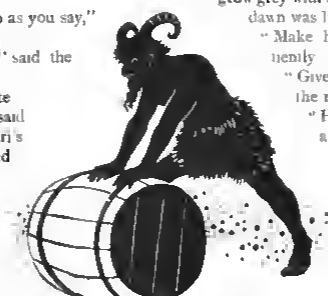
"Mistress," she said, "I have followed you thus far, but I dare not go into Indri's land."

"Miserable wretch," said the Mandarin, and, before Yua-nana could interfere, he dashed her little maiden aside, and led his daughter on. As he did so, the sky began to grow grey with streaks of light, where the dawn was breaking.

"Make haste," said Indri impatiently.

"Give us the water first," cried the men.

"Here you are," said Indri, and he rolled a huge cask of water to the gate.



Indri rolled a huge cask of water to the gate.

"When Yua-nana comes in, this shall be my free gift to you."

"I am coming," said Yua-nana. "Dear father, don't be afraid for me. I am quite willing to go."

Indri opened the gate. Yua-nana went in, and the cask rolled out. The father rushed to pull Yua-nana back, but the gate was shut and, though he shook it and kicked it in his rage, he could not get through, and the gate was too high to climb over. So he had at last sorrowfully to turn and make his way homewards, the men carrying the precious barrel of water.

On the way the father made them promise not to say where his child was. He told them to let people suppose that Indri had let them have the water on condition that for nine days no one went near the forest.

The next day was a sad one for Yua-nana's father. He distributed the water freely to all who asked for it. His wife was quite satisfied

that Yua-nana was all right if her husband said so. So she just went on as usual feeding her silkworms and scolding her maids. Oh! the Mandarin *was* sorry he had behaved so badly!

But poor Yua-nana was in a fright when she went in at that gate! You see, she was so tired with her long journey as well.

"Indri," she said sorrowfully, "I can't walk any further."

Indri clapped his hands, and two elephants appeared. Their drivers were little Brownies.

"Get up," said Indri.

So the beasts knelt, and Indri helped Yua-nana to get on.

Through the forest they journeyed until the sunlight began to peep among the forest trees.

"I don't know," said Yua-nana.

into the dainty orchid blooms. At last they stopped before a fine house. It had domes all gilt or gaily painted. Many beautiful flower-beds surrounded it. A winding path led from the entrance-gate, guarded by stone lions. A screen covered with flowers shielded the door from evil spirits. But Yua-nana knew nothing of all this; she had fallen fast asleep, and Indri carried her into his beautiful home.

He put her on some soft, silken cushions in a grand room, left cakes and fruit by her, lest she should be hungry when she woke, then called a Brownie to take care of her whilst he hastened to try and plan some amusements for Yua-nana, so that she should be willing to stay with him. His Fairy Mother was only too delighted to help him.

In all her life Yua-nana had never known such happy days as those which followed. Indri made the birds of the forest give a concert for her. Every day, too, he brought her costly presents of jewels and fine clothes. He picked his fairest flowers and his rarest orchids for the maiden, and the Brownies did not mind a bit!

They waited on Yua-nana, they showed her Indri's fountains, and arbours, and all his treasures. Their quaint little faces made her laugh most heartily, and she even did not mind Indri's ugliness.

At last one day Indri said:

"Yua-nana, the nine days are over, the path is before you, one of my Brownie guards will guide you to the gate, for your father will wait for you there."

Poor Indri was so sorry to part with Yua-nana, he could not say good-bye, nor could he bear to see her go. He left Yua-nana the Brownie to guide her, and hurried away to shut himself in his hut by the gate.

"Mother, come and comfort me," he cried, "Yua-nana is going away and I am as ugly as ever."

But his Fairy Mother answered him:

"My son, he who makes others happy is handsome and happy too."

Before Indri could answer, Yua-nana tapped at the door.

"You have been so good to me, dear Indri," she said; "do let me thank you before I go for all your kind thought of my happiness."

So Indri opened the door.

"What is the matter?" he said.

For the Brownie ran away in a panic, and Yua-nana looked very frightened.

"Your dress is so fine," she said. "Indeed, I hardly know you, you look like a great Ting, and your pigtail is so long and such a beauty."

Indri rushed to look at himself, and soon saw she was right. His robe was a Governor's, or Ting's, state dress, and its grandeur made his handsome face still better looking. Poor Indri was so joyous, he wanted to dance and sing, only he thought he had better not do that.

Meantime Yua-nana had been to the gate. Now she came quickly back.

"Indri! Indri!" she cried. "I can see my father coming with a long train of servants to take me home."

Indri came quickly to look, then he turned to gaze at Yua-nana's fair face

"Do you want to go, Yua-nana?" he said.

"I don't know," said Yua-nana.

"Then I will decide for you. Why, if you had not told me you were happy here, I believe I should always have been ugly Your sweet voice and kind heart have made me happy and handsome. If you don't stay with me, I know I shall soon grow cross and ugly again."

"Oh, please, don't do that," said Yua-nana, in a fright

Just at this moment the Mandarin knocked at the gate, and the Brownies, who had got over their panic, let him come in at once. He was so glad to see Yua-nana safe and well, and when he found out who it was who stood beside her, he was still more delighted

"My lord Indri," he said, "forgive as you would be forgiven; let us dwell at peace with one another in future."

"By my pigtail!" said Indri, "if you will but give me Yua-nana for my wife, all the world may drink of the water, I shall not hinder them."

"If you want Yua-nana, it would be better to sell the water till you get money enough to build a house fit for her to live in"

"I have a house already. Come and see," said Indri, and he led the way to his forest home. The Mandarin was so pleased with Indri's house, that he gave him Yua-nana for his wife at once, and the Brownies gaily spread a royal feast.

Then when the feast was over, the Mandarin took leave of his daughter Indri gave his father-in-law many rich presents which he took home to his wife, who was glad to hear such good news of her child. The Mandarin also told the people that they might now go and take as much water as they liked, and need pay nothing for it

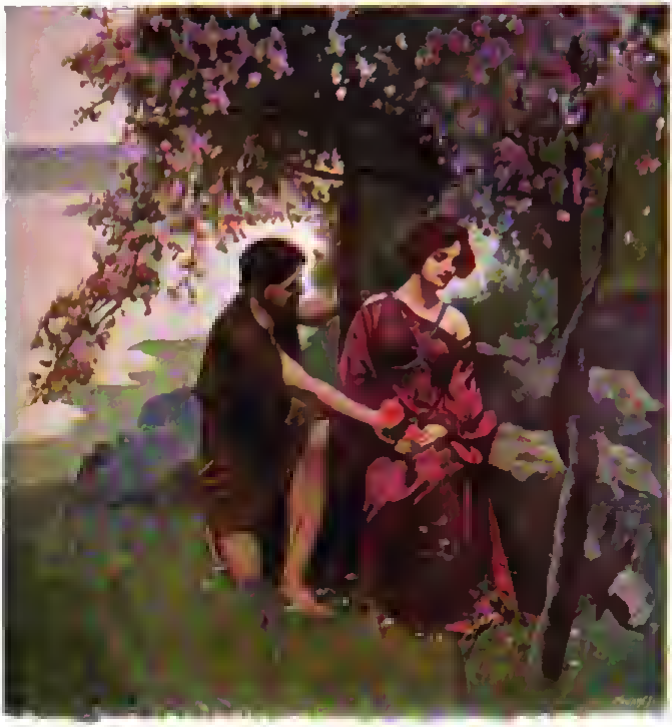
At first, thousands of the good people round about Tao-tsin went But, after a bit, because it was so easy to get, they thought more of the journey, and less of the value of the water.

So, as years passed, and the Mandarin and his wife died, gradually people left off climbing the steep path up to the forest stream The way became so hidden by brambles and weeds that at last it was quite lost to sight.

No man can find it now Only when it was too late, the people sorrowfully found out that their carelessness had lost them the precious water for ever

But though never seen by man, Indri and Yua-nana still live in that forest. Happy are they, for they drink of the water and never grow old. Their love for one another is as great as ever "For love," said Mrs Menatung, "is the only thing we cannot measure by time or space; it dwells with the virtuous and even visits the evil. It is the Royal Gift of the Heaven of Heavens. Love never dies"

Thousands of the good people round about Tao-tsin went.



"When for the first time thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to love."

THE ROSE OF EDEN.

"When sin fell on Eden and the first Parents of Mankind were driven forth from Paradise Eve in her sorrow and repentance prayed the Most Merciful God that He would grant her a boon for His dear mercy's sake, and this was that she might take one rose-bloom from a tree which had been her favourite in the Garden and carry it with her into the wilderness. And the Most Merciful God answered her by the mouth of Asrael, His Angel, and said: 'Thou shalt take thy rose with thee, daughter and, for thy sorrow's sake, from now till the end of Man's days on earth it shall never wither. Once in his life, or here every son and daughter of thine shall smell the sweet scent of it and, doing so, shall know the lost joys of Paradise.'

'So Eve took the rose, which to this day remains unwithered but unseen and thou who readest be thou son or daughter of hers hast smelled its sweet smell, or shalt do so, for Love is the common lot of man until the moment in which thou dost smell the sweetness of the Rose of Eden is when for the first time thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to love.'

—(Translation from the ancient Persian legend of the Rose of Eden.)

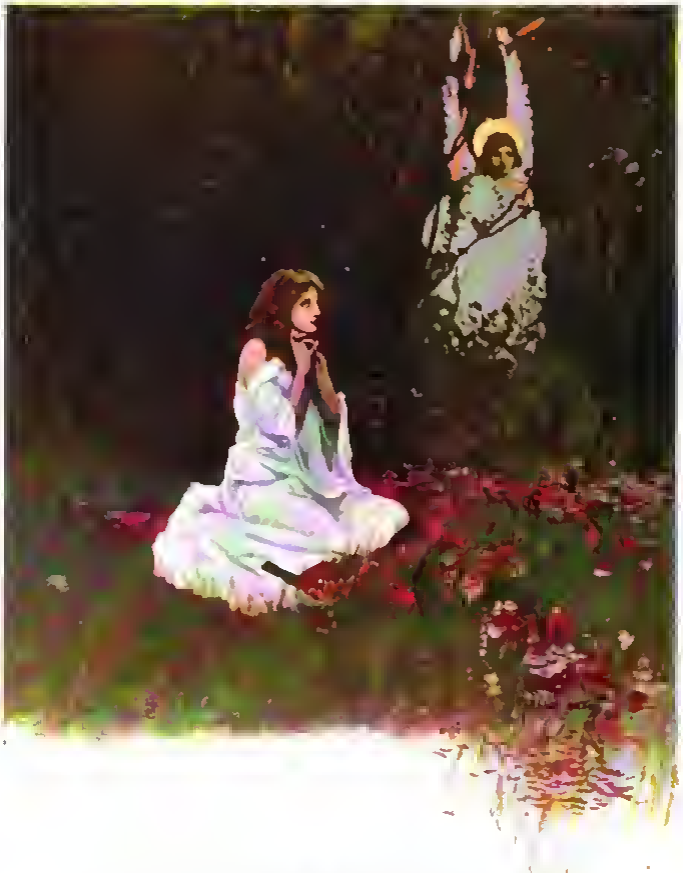
They tell an old-world tale in Eastern lands,
Whose fragrance drifts across the countless years
Like scent of flowers across the desert sands,
Fadeless as love and sweet as sinners' tears
Falling on gentle Mercy's outstretched hands.

Hear now the story told in broken
strains
Echoed through dim traditious vague and
vast
Older than that which tells why, after
rains,
God's bow across the glistening earth is cast,
Proof that His word endures unto the last.

Upon a sunny slope in Eden where
Summer and spring alternate reigned
supreme,
A rose-tree cast soft scents upon the air
From blossom-petals white as angel's
dream
Objects of maiden Eve's most loving
care.

And on a day—it was the last of those
That sinless Earth should see, she sleeping lay
Within her rose-tree's shade, lulled to repose
By the warm breathing of the swooning day,
And on her moving bosom fell a rose

She woke and raised her lovely light-crowned head
Lifting the gold-fringed curtains of her eyes
"Ah, what a dream You sent, dear God!" she said,
Whispering in sweet reproach and soft surprise,
Then looked she on the rose—and lo! 'twas red!



Red sign of sin—sin which the morrow brought,
When Eve knelt, weeping Sorrow's earliest tears
Beside her rose-tree, with the red rose caught
Close to her tear-washed breast, as one who fears
To lose a treasure that a soul has bought.

Close by, the Angel, armed with flaming sword,
White-robed, light-crowned, fire-winged, towered o er her there,
And she crept to him o'er the withering sward
Strewn with dead rose-blooms, thus to make her prayer:
"Lo, all is lost!—yet give me this O Lord!
"One little relic of our days divine
See, 'tis not withered as the others are!
My tears have given it life—may it be mine?"
The Angel smiled, and came a Voice from far:
"Thy prayer is heard—go forth—the rose is thine!

"And for thy sorrow's sake, thy rose shall live
Deathless as Love and fadeless as the skies,
And to thy children till the End shall give
One glimpse of God's own joy that never dies,
One in-breath of the scents of Paradise!"

The face of every land has changed since then,
The stars have wandered in their march above,
But changeless still beat on the hearts of men,
And Eve's sweet story still their souls shall move,
For she is Woman—and her rose is Love!

GEORGE GRIFFITH.

A BALLAD OF LOVE.

By C. Kennett Burrow.

The sun and the earth were babes at play,
The spring wind sang between
And ever the trees put off the grey
And ever put on the green

"I have wanted from sliding hour to hour,
And now comes night," said he;
"I have seen the yellow primrose flower
Break bud and look at me,

"I have heard the cry of the mating bird
That loves the long day through
And the heart of the world has heard and stirred,
But never a word from you

"And does your love need speech?" she said,
"Go to, your love is cold!"
"O, give me to kiss your mouth's live red,
To touch your hair of gold,

"He laughed and stooped and caught her up."

"O, give me to meet you hand to hand,
To serve you on my knee,
And I will be dumb as a desert land,
As dumb as death," said he

"Such love," she said, "is a little thing
To buy my body's worth,
Dare you ride with me to the edge of the sea
And the rim of the reeling earth?"

He laughed a light, low laugh of scorn.
"Dare I," he said, "do this?
Yea, I will ride by your right side,
To win a single kiss!"

The stars and the earth were babes at play,
The spring wind sang between,
And ever the woods put off the grey
And ever put on the green.

She caught her steed by his jewelled rein,
She cast the girth-thongs clear,
"Mount, mount," she cried, "we twain will ride
Till love make truce with fear!"

He laughed and stooped and caught her up,
As a man may take a bird,
And slaked his drouth at her burning mouth,
But his lips said never a word.

They passed like flame through the fragrant night,
Her hands about his heart,
And the breath of the world like vapour curled
To where God sits apart;

They rode 'neath a flying tide of stars,
They fled with eager sweep
By the ebb and flow of winds that blow
Across the fields of sleep

The grey dawn-falcon rose wide-winged
To harry the flying night,
The deep woods stirred to the waking bird
And the quick sea met the light;

The grey dawn-falcon hovered low,
With poising pinions spread:
And at last drew rein the riding twain,
For the world's one word was said

"Ah, love has cast forth fear!" she cried,
"And the meed of love is won,
I am yours by right of a strong man's might,
As the earth is slave to the sun"

The dawn and the earth were babes at play,
The spring wind sang between,
And ever the trees put off the grey
And ever put on the green.

A Tale of the Fourth Dimension.

By George Griffith.

I

Miss Iris Lincoln, clad in an easy and yet well-cut and well-fitting boating costume of some soft grey-looking flannely stuff, with something like a golf cap to match pinned on to the daintily arranged abundance of rather light chestnut hair which crowned her shapely and well-furnished head, was sitting near an open French window which, as the French say, gave on to a smooth green lawn that sloped down to the right bank of the Thames a mile or two below Richmond.

There was an open book on her lap—a book of exceedingly clever verse written years before by just such another as herself; a girl beautiful, learned, and yet absolutely womanly, and endowed moreover with that gift so rare among learned women, the gift of humour. Long years before this girl had taken the fever in Egypt, and died of it; but before she died she wrote a book of poems and verses, which, though forgotten, if ever known, by the multitude, is still treasured and re-read by some, and of these Miss Iris Lincoln, I. L. A., B.Sc. was one. Just now the book was open at the hundred and forty-third page on which there is a portion of a poem entitled "Natural Selection."

Miss Lincoln's eyes alternately rested on the page for a few moments, and then lifted and looked down the lawn towards the river. The verses ran as follows:

But there comes an idealess lad
With a strut, and a stare, and a smirk,
And I watch scientific though sad,
The Law of Selection at work.

Of Science he hasn't a trace,
He seeks not the How and the Why,
But he sings with an amateur's grace,
And he dances much better than I.

And we know the more dandified mates
By dance and by song win their wives—
'Tis a law that with *Apes* prevails,
And even in *Homo* survives.

"Just my precious papa's ideas!" she murmured, with a toss of her head and something like a little sniff. "What a nuisance it all is! Aristocracy of intellect, indeed! Just as if any of us, even my poor papa, if he *is* considered one of the cleverest and most learned men in Europe, were anything more than Newton called himself—little children picking up pebbles and grains of sand on the shore of a boundless and fathomless ocean, and calling them knowledge. I'm not sure that that's quite correct,

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but it's something like it. Still, that's not the question. How on earth am I to tell poor Fred? Oh, dear, he'll have to be 'Mr. Herne' now, I suppose. What a shame! I've half a mind to rebel, and vindicate the Law of Selection at any price. Ah, there he is. Well, I suppose I've got to get through it somehow."

As she said this the sharp, varnished nose of a boat swept round the willows at one corner of the garden, and the next moment a light, but roomy and comfortable, half-outrigged pair came into view, and stopped at the end of a little landing-plank which ran about ten feet out from the bank.

With a sigh and a frown she closed the book with a somewhat angry snap, tossed it on to a sofa on the opposite side of the window, and got up.

No daintier or more desirable incarnation of the Eternal Feminine could have been imagined than she presented as she walked with steps now hurried, now halting, down to the river to meet the man whom the Law of Selection had designated as her natural mate, and whom her father, for reasons presently to be made plain, had forbidden her to marry on pain of exile from his affections for ever.

The face he turned towards her as she approached was not exactly handsome as an artist or some women would have defined the word, but it was strong, honest, and open—just the sort of face, in short, to match the broad shoulders, the long, cleanly-shaped athletic limbs and the five feet eleven of young, healthy manhood with which Nature had associated it.

There was a light in his wide-set, blue-grey eyes, and a smile on his strong, well-cut lips which were absolutely boyish in their anticipation of sheer delight as she approached, and then, after one glance at her face, his own changed with a suddenness, which, to a disinterested observer, would have been almost comic.

"I'm awfully sorry, Fred," she began in a tone which literally sent a shiver—a real physical shiver through him, for he was very, very much in love with her.

"What on earth is the matter, Idris?" he said, shipping his other scull and standing up with the easy, well-balanced motion of a man thoroughly at home in a boat.

"Don't! Wait a minute!" exclaimed Miss Idris, with apparent irrelevance, as she ran down the plank and caught hold of the outrigger. "Now you can get out. I've a lot to say to you and——"

"And I suppose you'd sooner say it to me dry than wet," he replied, stepping out of the boat on to the cross-plank and somewhat needlessly taking her by the arm as he did so.

"Of course," she said, turning back towards the lawn to hide something she didn't want him to see. "Pull your boat up and come into the drawing-room, I've got something to—to—say to you."

And then this learned lady, this Licentiate of Literature and Arts, this Bachelor of Science and Gold-Medallist of London University, finding herself unable to say anything more, walked swiftly up the lawn towards the open French windows. Fred pulled his boat's nose up on the bank with an angry jerk and followed, wondering sadly.

II.

"Well, Idris, what is it? Let's have it out at once. It's a lot better to be shot through the heart than starved to death, you know. I suppose it's something pretty bad or else we should be pulling down the river just now."

"We shall never pull together any more, Fred, I'm afraid. Oh, it's—it's—it's a *beastly* shame, that's what it is, so there!" And as she said this, Miss Idris Lincoln, B.Sc. stamped her foot on the carpet and felt inclined to burst out crying, just as a milkmaid might have done.

"Which means," said Fred, pulling himself up, as a man about to face a mortal enemy would do, "that the Professor has said 'No.' In other words, he has decided that his learned and lovely daughter shall not, as I suppose he would put it, mate with an animal of a lower order. Well, Miss Lincoln——"

"Oh, don't, please don't!" she exclaimed, almost piteously, dropping into a big wicker armchair, and putting her hands over her eyes.

He had an awful fear that she was going to begin to cry, and, as the Easterns say, he

felt his heart turning to water within him. But her highly trained intellect came to her aid. She swallowed the sob and looked up at him with clear, dry eyes.

"It isn't quite that, Fred," she continued. "You know I wouldn't stand anything like that even from papa. Much and all as I love him and even, as you know, in some senses almost worship him, it isn't that. It's this theory of heredity of his—this scientific faith, bigotry I call it, for it is just the same to him as Catholicism was to the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. In fact, I told him last night that he reminded me of the Spanish grandee whose daughters were convicted of heresy by the Inquisition and who showed his devotion to the Church by lighting the faggots with his own hands."

"And what did he say to that?" said Fred, not because he wanted to know, but because there was an awkward pause that wanted filling.

"I would rather not tell you, Fred, if you don't mind," she said slowly and looking very straightly and steadily at him. "You know—well, I needn't tell you again what I've told you already. You know I care for you, and I always shall, but I cannot—I dare not—disobey my father. I owe everything to him. He has been father, mother, teacher, friend, companion—everything to me. We are absolutely alone in the world. If I could leave him for anybody, I'd leave him for you, but I won't disobey him and break his heart, as I believe I should, even for you."

"You're perfectly right, Idris, perfectly," said Fred in a tone of steady conviction which inspired her with an almost irresistible impulse to get up and kiss him. "You couldn't honestly do anything else, and I know that the shortest way to make you hate me would be to ask you to do that something else. But still," he went on, thrusting his hands into the pockets of his blazer, "I do think I have a sort of right to have some reason for this decision, and with your permission I shall just ask him for one."

"For goodness sake don't do that, Fred, don't!" she pleaded. "You might as well go and ask a Jewish Rabbi why he wouldn't let his daughter marry a Christian. Wise and clever and all as he is in other things, papa is simply a fanatic in this and—well, if he did condescend to explain, I'm afraid you might mistake what he would think the correct scientific way of putting it for an insult, and I couldn't bear to think of you quarrelling. You know you're the only two people in the world I—I—oh dear, what shall I do!"

It was at this point that the Law of Natural Selection stepped in. Natural laws of any sort have very little respect for the refinements of what mortals are pleased to call their philosophy. Professor Lincoln was a very great man—some said he was the greatest scientist of his age—but at this moment he was but as a grain of sand among the wheels of the mighty machine which grinds out human and other destinies.

Frederick Herne took two or three swift strides towards the chair in which Idris Lincoln was leaning back with her hands pressed to her eyes. He picked her up bodily, as he might have picked up a child of seven, put her protesting hands aside and slowly and deliberately kissed her three times squarely on the lips as if he meant it; and the third time her lips moved too. Then he whispered:

"Good-bye, dear, for the present at any rate!"

After which he deposited her tenderly in the chair again, and with just one last look turned and strode out through the open windows and down the lawn, saying some things to himself between his clenched teeth and thinking many more.

He launched his boat, got into her, shipped his sculls, and sent her flying through the water down stream, pulling fiercely and savagely at the oars. Two or three minutes later he heard shouts and screams behind him, then came a crash, followed by more shouts and screams, and the next moment he was in the water. The following three or four minutes were about the busiest in his life, but when they were over there were three other dripping figures beside his own standing on the bank. One was a youth, whose attire and language unmistakably bespoke the Mile End Road and its precincts. The two others were girls, whom he

informally and with much verbal embroidery introduced as his *fiancée* and her sister.

The young man in his rage forgot the fact that the three of them had just been rescued from almost certain death by a wonderful exhibition of strength and skill, and was inclined to be rude, but Herne speedily brought him to a more reasonable frame of mind by picking him up by his collar and his waistband and asking him if he would like to be thrown back. Then he dropped him, apologised handsomely to the young ladies, and ended by inviting the whole party into the house—for the catastrophe had providentially happened just at the bottom of his father's garden.

"Good-bye, dear, for the present at any rate."

An hour later they departed dry and joyful, well fed, and with champagne singing merrily in their empty brains, to say nothing of a five-pound note in addition to the assurance that everything would be made right with the owner of the boat.

"Well," said the *fiancée*, as they started off towards Richmond to get the fiver changed, "'e may be a blooming toff and 'e may 'ave rowed a bit careless, as you've done yerself, many a time, Bill, but a *man* from the roots of 'is 'air to the soles of his blooming feet, *that* 'e is!"

And, as it happened this identical thought, though, of course, shaping itself in very different words, was just at that moment occupying, to the exclusion of everything else, the highly cultivated intellect of Miss Idria Lincoln, B.Sc.

III.

Dinner that evening at the Willows—which was the name of the house in which Miss Idris Lincoln had awaited the coming of Mr Fred Herne—was a distinctly dismal function. The Professor who, in what might be called his non-scientific life, was one of the most genial of men, did his best to be cheerful. Miss Idris did hers, and between them they achieved an unmistakable and oppressive failure, and the result was that they were both glad, in a mournful sort of way, when it was all over.

"I suppose you're going to your room, Papa," said Idris as she rose from the table.

"Yes, dear."

"Then I'll bring you your coffee in a few minutes."

"Thank you, dear, I should be glad if you would."

For some years past the same words had been spoken over the same table, five nights out of every week, except perhaps when exams were on. They were a sort of formula, a semi-official intimation that the Professor was about to retire from one of the two worlds in which he lived into the other. They were spoken to-night rather as a relief than otherwise, for both father and daughter were beginning to find the situation impossible.

In about a quarter of an hour Miss Idris

"Still travelling towards the unknown world, Dad?"

entered the big, low-roofed, book-lined room in which her father had achieved his greatest triumphs. He was already sitting at a big, square writing-table littered with books, some shut and some open, pamphlets, newspaper-cuttings—or more properly, cuttings from scientific journals, because Professor Lionel Lincoln, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., etc., etc., looked upon a newspaper somewhat as an owl might look upon a butterfly—letters, and sheets of paper, some still virgin and some covered with the weird hieroglyphics of the Higher Mathematics.

She didn't care to move any of these, so she put the little silver salver with the coffee-pot and cup on it on to a three-legged table of wicker-work, poured out a cup of coffee and lifted it to within convenient distance of her father's left elbow. Then, laying her hand lightly upon his shoulder, she bent over him and looked at the sheet of figures and diagrams over which he was leaning.

"Still travelling towards the unknown world, Dad?" she said more cheerfully than she had spoken during dinner-time. "Take care, though! You know you may work your way out of the Third Dimension into the Fourth, and then find that you can't get back again. And then what should we—I mean I—do, left all alone in the prison of Three Dimensions?"

It was on the Professor's lips to say: "Marry that gold-plated ass Herne, I suppose." But he checked himself and said instead in a mild, impersonal sort of tone:

"Well really, Idris, I do think I'm getting very near to it now. In fact, the borderland is almost in sight, and once that is crossed who knows what discoveries may be made!"

He felt the light touch of his daughter's fingers on his now somewhat scanty hair, and then she vanished, leaving him, although he didn't know it just then, on the brink of the greatest discovery he had ever made, albeit not quite of the sort he had anticipated.

He stirred his coffee and drank it in an abstracted sort of way, and then went back to his diagrams and hieroglyphics. After a couple of hours, which had sped like a couple of minutes, the last diagram, containing the essence of all the others, was drawn, the last quadruple set of cubic equations had been reduced to one and that had solved itself, and then the Professor, throwing down his pencil with a sigh of almost ecstatic relief, raised his head, and saw, sitting on the opposite side of the table, which stood in the middle of the room—himself.

"Dear me!" he said, rubbing his hand rather angrily across his eyes, "I'm afraid I must have been overdoing it a little. Of course, a subjective projection of my own sub-consciousness. In short just what an ignorant person would take for a ghost."

"Not at all, my dear fellow," said his own voice from the other side of the table. "Dear me, what a child you are, after all! You, a man with a universal reputation and, as far as your own plane of existence is concerned, I suppose, as clever a man, relatively speaking, as there is known. By the way, why don't you allow Idris to marry that young fellow Heme? You know, even from your limited point of view, there couldn't be a better man for her."

"Confound it!" said the Professor, brushing his hand across his eyes again, "this is really most extraordinary. Ah! it's gone. I thought it was only an illusion. I shall have to take a week's holiday."

"Excuse me, it isn't," said his own voice from the same place, and the next moment, he saw his Other-self sitting just where it had been. "You must excuse me, my dear Lionel," it went on with irritating calmness, "but I see I shall have to treat you, for the present, as a half-educated person who has just stumbled on to what is, for you, a great discovery; or rather perhaps I should say, as a child who has just managed to reach the horizon of a new world."

For the first time in his life, the Professor felt a thrill of really superstitious fear, the very last emotion that he ever expected to experience. He wanted to say something impatient and rude, but instead, he found himself saying rather weakly:

"Whatever you are, I don't understand, I must say. Are you anything at all, and if so what on earth do you mean?"

"We are not on earth just now," replied the Voice. "At least, not in your sense. You see, you, in the pride of your knowledge, just managed to work yourself to the horizon of the world of four dimensions. You are, in fact, just looking across it, and therefore you must expect to see strange things. Just take up that sheet of paper in front of you and I'll explain what I mean."

The Professor obeyed as meekly as one of his own pupils would have done in the days when he lectured to classes, and the Voice went on:

"Now, you see, that that sheet of paper represents a world of two dimensions. A being living in such a world could only see or move in two directions, and he would have no knowledge whatever of up and down. Therefore, a being living in a world of three dimensions able to see and move north, south, east, and west, and also up and down could make himself visible or invisible at will to the dweller in two dimensions by just passing through his horizon. Now, you have hitherto lived in a world of three dimensions, but, having reached the borderland of the fourth, you have brought me, your Other-self, into being. I live in four."

"And what is the fourth, may I ask?" exclaimed the Professor, with an eagerness which instantly banished scruples and nervousness alike. "What is it? Have I really found it?"

"Unfortunately," replied his Other-self, with exasperating calmness, "not only is there no word in any language known to you which would express the concept, but the concept itself would be unintelligible to you save by bald experience until you have crossed the border on which you now stand. And so I'm afraid I can only explain it to you by examples. I see you are wearing a couple of rings. Just give them to me, will you?"

"I'm afraid I can't give you this one," said the Professor, putting the thumb and forefinger of his right hand over a plain gold circle, which was the second of the rings on the third finger of his left hand. "This has never left my finger for twenty years."

His Other-self looked across the table at him and smiled, and then it said in a more genial voice than before:

"I know. Your wife's wedding ring. She was the daughter of a somewhat ignorant American who made a fortune by judicious advertising of rather cheap and rubbishy soft goods, wasn't she? And yet you were very fond of her, weren't you? And your daughter—well, she's a long way removed from a soft goods store, isn't she? And after all it was a purely fortuitous union, at least as far as you can see—a mere matter of chance, of natural selection in short, guided by no scientific principles at all.

"Yet in her case—although you, with your limited three-dimensional vision ought to be able to see perfectly clearly that she has chosen exactly the sort of man she ought to

have chosen and in fact must inevitably have chosen—*you* presume to direct the very laws which you are only just beginning to dimly comprehend! Were *your* father and mother particularly distinguished for mental capacity? You know very well that they were not—and yet you have won a name and a reputation coextensive with latitude and longitude. I suppose you want to marry her to a younger edition of yourself and make her the miserable mother of hydrocephalous offspring! Really, my dear fellow, you are very like a child putting a stone on a railway line in front of an express train."

"I can't quite see where this conversation is leading to!" the Professor interrupted at this point rather angrily. "Are manners unknown in the Fourth Dimension?"

"There is no such thing as polite deceit in the world into which you are just looking," replied the Voice, "and therefore, truth-telling is not only good manners but inevitable. You'll learn that a little later on if you choose to pursue your investigations. Now I know you still have an idea that either you are dreaming or that I, your four-dimensional Other-self, am only, as you said, a subjective projection of your own consciousness, and therefore I must convince you that you're wrong. Excuse me, I want that ring."

As he said this, the Other-self came to the edge of the table and leant over with outstretched hand. The Professor, whose left hand was then lying on the table, clenched his fist and was just going to say something of a violent nature, when the Other-self took hold of the wedding-ring between his thumb and forefinger and, without causing the Professor even a sensation of touch, drew the ring through the finger, or the finger through the ring—the Professor couldn't quite make out which it was. Then, picking up the other ring, which the Professor had already taken off, he passed them through each other, dropped them with a musical clink on the table and said:

The Other-self leant over with outstretched hand.

"There now. That is of course quite impossible in your world, and yet you see it's perfectly simple. Look at them, they've not been broken."

The Professor took up the two rings with trembling fingers. One was a sealing-ring belonging to his father, big and massive, and set with a carved onyx; the other—well we know what that was. He examined them keenly with wondering eyes. They were absolutely intact, and yet there they were, like two links of forged chain interlocked. He felt himself turning pale under the grave eyes of his Other-self.

"It is a miracle!" he said with something like a gasp.

"Not at all," said the Other-self. "It is

simply the result of operations which, if you will allow me to say so, you understand as little as you appear to understand the Law of Natural Selection.

"And yet it is just as simple if you only knew, although it would not be much practical use to you yet. However, in another sense, it has led you to the greatest discovery you have ever made."

"What is that?" said the Professor. "The Fourth Dimension, I suppose."

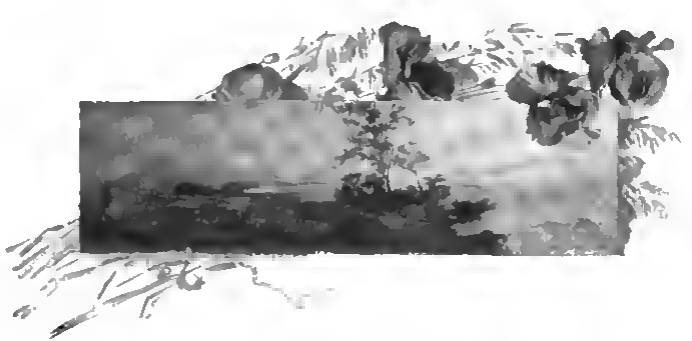
"No," replied the Other-self, rather drily. "You have discovered your own ignorance. I could work miracle after miracle like that for you. I could put this table through the wall into the garden without your seeing it go and without making a hole in the wall. I could take the works out of your watch without opening the case. I could separate your watch-chain into links without breaking one of them. I could vanish myself and then move the furniture about the room. But what would be the good? You would simply look on like a child watching conjuring tricks.

"Nevertheless, all of this is not only possible, but perfectly commonplace in the world to which you have almost gained an entrance, and everything is done in accordance with laws which are just as simple and just as inevitable as, for instance, that Law of Natural Selection, which I will now try and make a little plainer to you."

The strange conversation went on hour after hour, and the Professor saw and heard many marvels which the limitations of the language which I write and you read make impossible of description. The last thing he remembered was shaking his Other-self heartily by the hand, and then he fell asleep.

About two o'clock he woke shivering, in spite of the warmth of the summer night. Had it all been a dream, a vision conjured up out of the many speculations which his latest study had inspired him with? No, the lamp was still burning on his table, and there, under the full glow, lay, upon the sheets containing his last calculations, his dead wife's wedding-ring interlinked with his father's seal.

It is hardly necessary to say that he came down to breakfast a humbler, because a wiser man, and there is nothing more to add to the present narrative save the fact that when Miss Idris Lincoln stood before the altar with Mr. Frederick Herne, she wore, instead of a necklace, a piece of black velvet from which hung the two interlinked rings—than which there could have been no better emblem of the mystic union into which she was herself entering.



"How improper—dear me!"

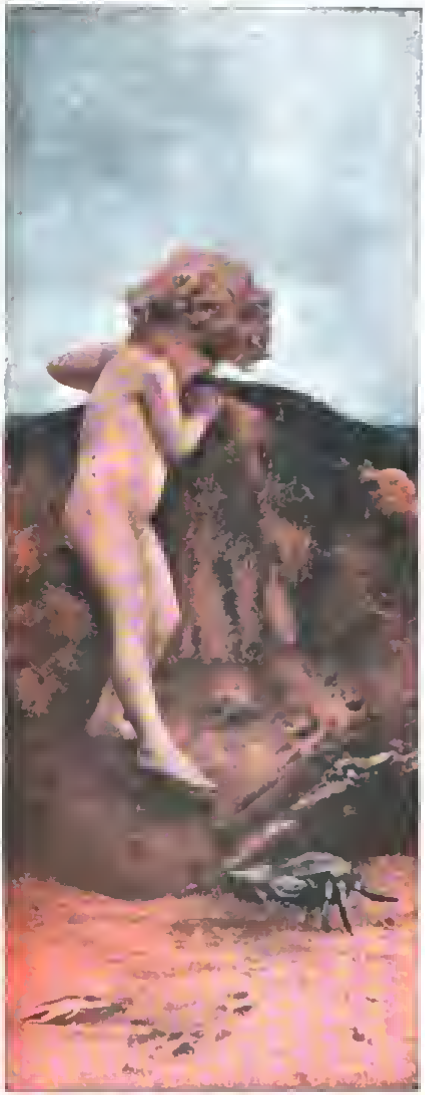
THE ADVENTURES OF A SEA-URCHIN.

There was a small damsel and she
Went down for a
stroll by the
sea,
But before she
got there
She was met by
a hare,
Who exclaimed:
"How im-
proper—dear
me!"

"You rude thing! How dare you!" she
said,
"When *yoo*'ve ears
on the top of
your head!
I was *going* to
make friends,
But your rude-
ness offends,
So I'll play with the
fishes in-
stead."

She went on her way down the sands.

"—Mr Gull, your converse is dull."



She was met by a Thing

Then she went on her way
down the sands—
Far away from the niggers and
bands—
Until down from the sky
Wheeled unsteadily by
An old gull, which flopped into
her hands.

In a while, she remarked:
"Well, I've heard
That your name means not
only a bird,—
And that's true, Mr. Gull,
For your converse is dull,
And your notions are simply
absurd!"

Farther on she was met by a
Thing,
Which looked able to bite—or
to sting,
A creepy-crawl creature
Without one good feature,
Who remarked: "Will you
shake hands and sing?"

But the damsel replied: "Well,
you know,
Your hands look suspicious,
and so
I think that I shan't,
For the song that *you* want
I might sing when you wouldn't
let go!"

Last of all, through the bracken
and furze
Came an angry and terrified
nurse,
And the damsel soon found
Herself in for a sound
Moral lecture—perhaps some-
thing worse.

THE MONSTER OF LAKE LAMETRIE

By Wardon Allan Curtis

Being the narration of James McLennegan, M.D., Ph.D.

Lake LaMetrie, Wyoming,
April 1st, 1899.

Prof. William G. Breyfogle,
University of Taychebera.

Dear Friend,—Inclosed you will find some portions of the diary it has been my life-long custom to keep, arranged in such a manner as to narrate connectedly the history of some remarkable occurrences that have taken place here during the last three years. Years and years ago, I heard vague accounts of a strange lake high up in an almost inaccessible part of the mountains of Wyoming. Various incredible tales were related of it, such as that it was inhabited by creatures which elsewhere on the globe are found only as fossils of a long vanished time.

The lake and its surroundings are of volcanic origin, and not the least strange thing about the lake is that it is subject to periodic disturbances, which take the form of a mighty boiling in the centre, as if a tremendous artesian well were rushing up there from the bowels of the earth. The lake rises for a time, almost filling the basin of black rocks in which it rests, and then recedes, leaving on the shores mollusks and trunks of strange trees and bits of strange ferns which no longer grow—on the earth, at least—and are to be seen elsewhere only in coal measures and beds of stone. And he who casts hook and line into the dusky waters, may haul forth ganoid fishes completely covered with bony plates.

All of this is described in the account written by Father LaMetrie years ago, and he there advances the theory that the earth is hollow, and that its interior is inhabited by the forms of plant and animal life which disappeared from its surface ages ago, and that the lake connects with this interior region. Symmes' theory of polar orifices is well known to you. It is amply corroborated. I know that it is true now. Through the great holes at the poles, the sun sends light and heat into the interior.

Three years ago this month, I found my way through the mountains here to Lake LaMetrie accompanied by a single companion—our friend, young Edward Framingham. He was led to go with me not so much by scientific fervor, as by a faint hope that his health might be improved by a sojourn in the mountains, for he suffered from an acute form of dyspepsia that at times drove him frantic.

Beneath an overhanging scarp of the wall of rock surrounding the lake we found a rudely-built stone-house left by the old cliff dwellers. Though somewhat draughty, it would keep out the infrequent rains of the region, and serve well enough as a shelter for the short time which we intended to stay.

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The extracts from my diary follow:

APRIL 29TH, 1896.

I have been occupied during the past few days in gathering specimens of the various plants which are cast upon the shore by the waves of this remarkable lake. Framingham does nothing but fish, and claims that he has discovered the place where the lake communicates with the interior of the earth, if, indeed, it does, and there seems to be little doubt of that. While fishing at a point near the centre of the lake, he let down three pickerel lines tied together, in all nearly three hundred feet, without finding bottom. Coming ashore, he collected every bit of line, string, strap, and rope in our possession, and made a line five hundred feet long, and still he was unable to find the bottom.

MAY 2ND, EVENING.

The past three days have been profitably spent in securing specimens, and mounting and pickling them for preservation. Framingham has had a bad attack of dyspepsia this morning and is not very well. Change of climate had a brief effect for the better upon his malady, but seems to have exhausted its force much sooner than one would have expected, and he lies on his couch of dry water-weeds, moaning piteously. I shall take him back to civilisation as soon as he is able to be moved.

It is very annoying to have to leave when I have scarcely begun to probe the mysteries of the place. I wish Framingham had not come with me. The lake is roaring wildly without, which is strange, as it has been perfectly calm hitherto, and still more strange because I can neither feel nor hear the rushing of the wind, though perhaps that is because it is blowing from the south, and we are protected from it by the cliff. But in that case there ought to be no waves on this shore. The roaring seems to grow louder momentarily. Framingham—

MAY 3RD, MORNING.

Such a night of terror we have been through. Last evening, as I sat writing in my diary, I heard a sudden hiss, and, looking down, saw wriggling across the earthen floor what I at first took to be a serpent of some kind, and then discovered was a stream of water which, coming in contact with the fire, had caused the startling hiss. In a moment, other streams had darted in, and before I had collected my senses enough to move, the water was two inches deep everywhere and steadily rising.

Now I knew the cause of the roaring, and, rousing Framingham, I half dragged him, half carried him to the door, and digging our feet into the chinks of the wall of the house, we climbed up to its top. There was nothing else to do, for above us and behind us was the unscalable cliff, and on each side the ground sloped away rapidly, and it would have been impossible to reach the high ground at the entrance to the basin.

After a time we lighted matches, for with all this commotion there was little air stirring, and we could see the water, now half-way up the side of the house, rushing to the west with the force and velocity of the current of a mighty river, and every little while it hurled tree-trunks against the house-walls with a terrific shock that threatened to batter them down. After an hour or so, the roaring began to decrease, and finally there was an absolute silence. The water, which reached to within a foot of where we sat, was at rest, neither rising nor falling.

Presently a faint whispering began and became a stertorous breathing, and then a rushing like that of the wind and a roaring rapidly increasing in volume, and the lake was in motion again, but this time the water and its swirling freight of tree-trunks flowed by the house toward the east, and was constantly falling, and out in the centre of the lake the beams of the moon were darkly reflected by the sides of a huge whirlpool streaking the surface of polished blackness down, down, down the vortex into the beginning of whose terrible depths we looked from our high perch.

This morning the lake is back at its usual level. Our mules are drowned, our boat destroyed, our food damaged, my specimens and some of my instruments injured, and Framingham is very ill. We shall have to depart soon, although I dislike exceedingly to do so, as the disturbance of last night, which is clearly like the one described by

Father Lametrie, has undoubtedly brought up from the bowels of the earth some strange and interesting things. Indeed, out in the middle of the lake where the whirlpool subsided, I can see a large quantity of floating things, logs and branches, most of them probably, but who knows what else?

Through my glass I can see a tree-trunk, or rather stump, of enormous dimensions. From its width I judge that the whole tree must have been as large as some of the Californian big trees. The main part of it appears to be about ten feet wide and thirty feet long. Projecting from it and lying prone on the water is a limb, or root, some fifteen feet long, and perhaps two or three feet thick. Before we leave, which will be as soon as Framingham is able to go, I shall make a raft and visit the mass of driftwood, unless the wind providentially sends it ashore.

I did not fairly see the terrible creature until I had swung my machete round.

MAY 4TH, EVENING.

A day of most remarkable and wonderful occurrences. When I arose this morning and looked through my glass, I saw that the mass of driftwood still lay in the middle of the lake, motionless on the glassy surface, but the great black stump had disappeared. I was sure it was not hidden by the rest of the driftwood, for yesterday it lay some distance from the other logs, and there had been no disturbance of wind or water to change its position. I therefore concluded that it was some heavy wood that needed to become but slightly waterlogged to cause it to sink.

Framingham having fallen asleep at about ten, I sallied forth to look along the shores for specimens, carrying with me a botanical can, and a South American machete, which I have possessed since a visit to Brazil three years ago, where I learned the usefulness of this sabre-like thing. The shore was strewn with bits of strange plants and shells, and I was stooping to pick one up, when suddenly I felt my clothes plucked, and heard a snap behind me, and turning about I saw—but I won't describe it until I tell what I did, for I did not fairly see the terrible creature until I had swung my machete round and sliced off the top of its head, and then tumbled down into the shallow water where I lay almost fainting.

Here was the black log I had seen in the middle of the lake, a monstrous elasmosaurus, and high above me on the heap of rocks lay the thing's head with its long jaws crowded with sable-like teeth, and its enormous eyes as big as saucers. I wondered that it did not move, for I expected a series of convulsions, but no sound of a commotion was heard from the creature's body, which lay out of my sight on the other side of the rocks. I decided that my sudden cut had acted like a stunning blow and produced a sort of coma, and fearing lest the beast should recover the use of its muscles before death fully took place, and in its agony roll away into the deep water where I could not secure it, I hastily removed the brain entirely, performing the operation neatly, though with some trepidation, and restoring to the head the detached segment cut off by my machete, I proceeded to examine my prize.

In length of body, it is exactly twenty-eight feet. In the widest part it is eight feet through laterally, and is some six feet through from back to belly. Four great flippers, rudimentary arms and feet, and an immensely long sinuous, swan-like neck, complete the creature's body. Its head is very small for the size of the body and is very round and a pair of long jaws project in front much like a duck's bill. Its skin is a leathery integument of a lustrous black, and its eyes are enormous hazel optics with a soft, melancholy stare in their liquid depths. It is an elasmosaurus, one of the largest of antediluvian animals. Whether of the same species as those whose bones have been discovered, I cannot say.

My examination finished, I hastened after Framingham, for I was certain that this waif from a long past age would arouse almost any invalid. I found him somewhat recovered from his attack of the morning, and he eagerly accompanied me to the elasmosaurus. In examining the animal afresh, I was astonished to find that its heart was still beating and that all the functions of the body except thought were being performed one hour after the thing had received its death blow, but I knew that the hearts of sharks have been known to beat hours after being removed from the body, and that decapitated frogs live, and have all the powers of motion, for weeks after their heads have been cut off.

I removed the top of the head to look into it and here another surprise awaited me, for the edges of the wound were granulating and preparing to heal. The colour of the interior of the skull was perfectly healthy and natural, there was no undue flow of blood, and there was every evidence that the animal intended to get well and live without a brain. Looking at the interior of the skull, I was struck by its resemblance to a human skull; in fact, it is, as nearly as I can judge, the size and shape of the brain-pan of an ordinary man who wears a seven and an eighth hat. Examining the brain itself, I found it to be the size of an ordinary human brain, and singularly like it in general contour, though it is very inferior in fibre and has few convolutions.

MAY 5TH, MORNING.

Framingham is exceedingly ill and talks of dying, declaring that if a natural death does not put an end to his sufferings, he will commit suicide. I do not know what to do. All my attempts to encourage him are of no avail, and the few medicines I have no longer fit his case at all.

MAY 5TH, EVENING.

I have just buried Framingham's body in the sand of the lake shore. I performed no ceremonies over the grave, for perhaps the real Framingham is not dead, though such a speculation seems utterly wild. To-morrow I shall erect a cairn upon the mound, unless indeed there are signs that my experiment is successful, though it is foolish to hope that it will be.

At ten this morning, Framingham's qualms left him, and he set forth with me to see the elasmosaurus. The creature lay in the place where we left it yesterday, its position unaltered, still breathing, all the bodily functions performing themselves. The wound in its head had healed a great deal during the night, and I daresay will be completely healed within a week or so, such is the rapidity with which these reptilian organisms repair damages to themselves. Collecting three or four bushels of mussels I shelled them and poured them down the elasmosaurus's throat. With a con-

vulsive gasp, they passed down and the great mouth slowly closed.

"How long do you expect to keep the reptile alive?" asked Framingham.

"Until I have gotten word to a number of scientific friends, and they have come here to examine it. I shall take you to the nearest settlement and write letters from there. Returning, I shall feed the elasmosaurus regularly until my friends come, and we decide what final disposition to make of it. We shall probably stuff it."

"But you will have trouble in killing it, unless you hack it to pieces, and that won't do. Oh, if I only had the vitality of that animal. There is a monster whose vitality is so splendid that the removal of its brain does not disturb it. I should feel very happy if someone would remove my body. If I only had some of that beast's useless strength."

"In your case, the possession of a too active brain has injured the body," said I. "Too much brain exercise and too little bodily exercise are the causes of your trouble. It would be a pleasant thing if you had the robust health of the elasmosaurus, but what a wonderful thing it would be if that mighty engine had your intelligence."

I turned away to examine the reptile's wounds, for I had brought my surgical instruments with me, and intended to dress them. I was interrupted by a burst of groans from Framingham and turning, beheld him rolling on the sand in an agony. I hastened to him, but before I could reach him, he seized my case of instruments, and taking the largest and sharpest knife, cut his throat from ear to ear.

"Framingham, Framingham," I shouted and, to my astonishment, he looked at me intelligently. I recalled the case of the French doctor who, for some minutes after being guillotined, answered his friends by winking.

"If you hear me, wink," I cried. The right eye closed and opened with a snap. Ah, here the body was dead and the brain lived. I glanced at the elasmosaurus. Its mouth, half closed over its gleaming teeth, seemed to smile an invitation. The intelligence of the man and the strength of the beast. The living body and the living brain. The curious resemblance of the reptile's brain-pan to that of a man flashed across my mind.

"Are you still alive, Framingham?"

The right eye winked. I seized my machete, for there was no time for delicate instruments. I might destroy all by haste and roughness, I was sure to destroy all by delay. I opened the skull and disclosed the brain. I had not injured it, and breaking the wound of the elasmosaurus's head, placed the brain within. I dressed the wound and, hurrying to the house, brought all my store of stimulants and administered them.

For years the medical fraternity has been predicting that brain-grafting will some time be successfully accomplished. Why has it never been successfully accomplished? Because it has not been tried. Obviously, a brain from a dead body cannot be used and what living man would submit to the horrible process of having his head opened, and portions of his brain taken for the use of others?

The brains of men are frequently examined when injured and parts of the brain removed, but parts of the brains of other men have never been substituted for the parts removed. No uninjured man has ever been found who would give any portion of his brain for the use of another. Until criminals under sentence of death are handed over to science for experimentation, we shall not know what can be done in the way of brain-grafting. But public opinion would never allow it.

Conditions are favourable for a fair and thorough trial of my experiment. The weather is cool and even, and the wound in the head of the elasmosaurus has every chance for healing. The animal possesses a vitality superior to any of our later day animals, and if any organism can successfully become the host of a foreign brain, nourishing and cherishing it, the elasmosaurus with its abundant vital forces can do it. It may be that a new era in the history of the world will begin here.

MAY 6TH, NOON.

I think I will allow my experiment a little more time.

MAY 7TH, NOON.

It cannot be imagination. I am sure that

as I looked into the elasmosaurus's eyes this morning there was expression in them. Dim, it is true, a sort of mistiness that floats over them like the reflection of passing clouds.

MAY 8TH, NOON.

I am more sure than yesterday that there *is* expression in the eyes, a look of troubled fear, such as is seen in the eyes of those who dream nightmares with unclosed lids.

MAY 11TH, EVENING.

I have been ill, and have not seen the elasmosaurus for three days, but I shall be better able to judge the progress of the experiment by remaining away a period of some duration.

MAY 12TH, NOON.

I am overcome with awe as I realise the success that has so far crowned my experiment. As I approached the elasmosaurus this morning, I noticed a faint disturbance in the water near its flippers. I cautiously investigated, expecting to discover some fishes nibbling at the helpless monster, and saw that the commotion was not due to fishes, but to the flippers themselves, which were feebly moving.

"Framingham, Framingham," I bawled at the top of my voice. The vast bulk stirred a little, a very little, but enough to notice. Is the brain, or Framingham, it would perhaps be better to say, asleep, or has he failed to establish connection with the body? Undoubtedly he has not yet established connection with the body, and this of itself would be equivalent to sleep, to unconsciousness. As a man born with none of the senses would be unconscious of himself, so Framingham, just beginning to establish connections with his new body, is only dimly conscious of himself and sleeps. I fed him, or it—which is the proper designation will be decided in a few days—with the usual allowance.

MAY 17TH, EVENING.

I have been ill for the past three days and have not been out of doors until this morning. The elasmosaurus was still motionless when I arrived at the cove this morning. Dead, I thought; but I soon detected signs of breathing, and I began to prepare some mussels for it, and was intent upon my task when I heard a slight, gasping sound, and looked up. A feeling of terror seized me. It was as if in response to some doubting incantations there had appeared the half-desired, yet wholly-feared and unexpected apparition of a fiend. I shrieked, I screamed, and the amphitheatre of rocks echoed and re-echoed my cries, and all the time the head of the elasmosaurus raised aloft to the full height of its neck, swayed about unsteadily, and its mouth silently struggled and twisted, as if in an attempt to form words, while its eyes looked at me now with wild fear and now with piteous intreaty.

"Framingham," I said.

The monster's mouth closed instantly, and it looked at me attentively, pathetically so, as a dog might look.

"Do you understand me?"

The mouth began struggling again, and little gasps and moans issued forth.

"If you understand me, lay your head on the rock."

Down came the head. He understood me. My experiment was a success. I sat for a moment in silence, meditating upon the wonderful affair, striving to realise that I was awake and sane, and then began in a calm manner to relate to my friend what had taken place since his attempted suicide.

"You are at present something in the condition of a partial paralytic, I should judge," said I, as I concluded my account. "Your mind has not yet learned to command your new body. I see you can move your head and neck, though with difficulty. Move your body if you can. Ah, you cannot, as I thought. But it will all come in time. Whether you will ever be able to talk or not, I cannot say, but I think so, however. And now if you cannot, we will arrange some means of communication. Anyhow, you are rid of your human body and possessed of the powerful vital apparatus you so much envied its former owner. When you gain control of yourself, I wish you to find the communication between this lake and the under-world and conduct some explorations. Just think of the additions to geological knowledge you can make. I will write an account of your discovery, and

the names of Framingham and McLennegan will be among those of the greatest geologists."

I waved my hands in my enthusiasm, and the great eyes of my friend glowed with a kindred fire.

JUNE 2ND, NIGHT.

The process by which Framingham has passed from his first powerlessness to his present ability to speak, and command the use of his corporeal frame, has been so gradual that there has been nothing to note down from day to day. He seems to have all the command over his vast bulk that its former owner had, and in addition speaks and sings. He is singing now. The north wind has risen with the fall of night, and out there in the darkness I hear the mighty organ pipe-tones of his tremendous, magnificent voice, chanting the solemn notes of the Gregorian, the full throated Latin words mingling with the roaring of the wind in a wild and weird harmony.

To-day he attempted to find the connection between the lake and the interior of the earth, but the great well that sinks down in the centre of the lake is choked with rocks and he has discovered nothing. He is tormented by the fear that I will leave him, and that he will perish of loneliness. But I shall not leave him. I feel too much pity for the loneliness he would endure, and besides, I wish to be on the spot should another of those mysterious convulsions open the connection between the lake and the lower world.

He is beset with the idea that should other men discover him, he may be captured and exhibited in a circus or museum, and declares that he will fight for his liberty even to the extent of taking the lives of those attempting to capture him. As a wild animal, he is the property of whomsoever captures him, though perhaps I can set up a title to him on the ground of having tamed him.

JULY 6TH.

One of Framingham's fears has been realised.

He turned and sped through the pass at all speed.

I was at the pass leading into the basin, watching the clouds grow heavy and pendulous with their load of rain, when I saw a butterfly net appear over a knoll in the pass, followed by its bearer, a small man, unmistakably a scientist, but I did not note him well, for as he looked down into the valley, suddenly there burst forth with all the power and volume of a steam calliope, the tremendous voice of Framingham, singing a Greek song of Anacreon to the tune of "Where did you get that hat?" and the singer appeared in a little cove, the black column of his great neck raised aloft, his jagged jaws wide open

That poor little scientist. He stood transfixed, his butterfly net dropped from his hand, and as Framingham ceased his singing, curvetted and leaped from the water and came down with a splash that set the whole cove swashing, and laughed a guffaw that echoed among the cliffs like the laughing of a dozen demons, he turned and sped through the pass at all speed.

I skip all entries for nearly a year. They are unimportant.

JUNE 30TH, 1897.

A change is certainly coming over my friend I began to see it some time ago, but refused to believe it and set it down to imagination A catastrophe threatens, the absorption of the human intellect by the brute body There are precedents for believing it possible. The human body has more influence over the mind than the mind has over the body. The invalid, delicate Framingham with refined mind, is no more. In his stead is a roistering monster, whose boisterous and commonplace conversation betrays a constantly growing coarseness of mind.

No longer is he interested in my scientific investigations, but pronounces them all bosh No longer is his conversation such as an educated man can enjoy, but slangy and diffuse iterations concerning the trivial happenings of our uneventful life Where will it end? In the absorption of the human mind by the brute body? In the final triumph of matter over mind and the degradation of the most mundane force and the extinction of the celestial spark? Then, indeed, will Edward Framingham be dead, and over the grave of his human body can I fittingly erect a headstone, and then will my vigil in this valley be over.

FORT D. A. RUSSELL, WYOMING,
APRIL 15TH, 1899.

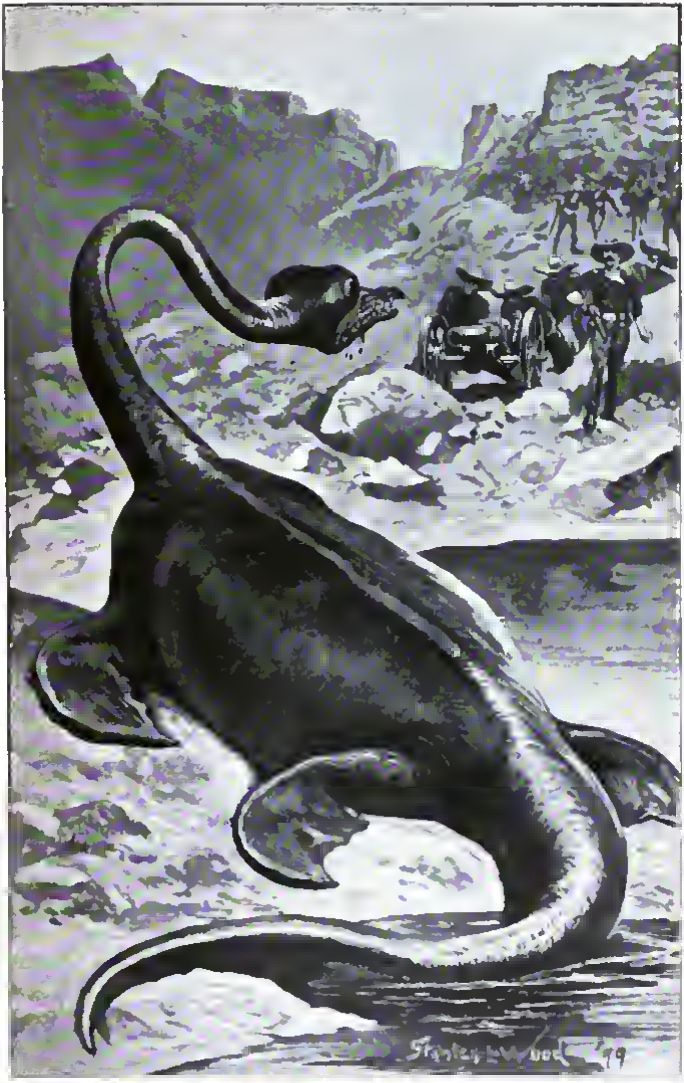
Prof. William G. Breyfogle.

DEAR SIR,—The inclosed intact manuscript and the fragments which accompany it, came into my possession in the manner I am about to relate and I inclose them to you, for whom they were intended by their late author. Two weeks ago, I was dispatched into the mountains after some Indians who had left their reservation, having under my command a company of infantry and two squads of cavalrymen with mountain howitzers On the seventh day of our pursuit, which led us into a wild and unknown part of the mountains, we were startled at hearing from somewhere in front of us a succession of bellowings of a very unusual nature, mingled with the cries of a human being apparently in the last extremity, and rushing over a rise before us, we looked down upon a lake and saw a colossal, indescribable thing engaged in rending the body of a man.

Observing us, it stretched its jaws and laughed, and in saying this, I wish to be taken literally. Part of my command cried out that it was the devil, and turned and ran. But I rallied them, and thoroughly enraged at what we had witnessed, we marched down to the shore, and I ordered the howitzers to be trained upon the murderous creature. While we were doing this, the thing kept up a constant blabbing that bore a distinct resemblance to human speech, sounding very much like the jabbering of an imbecile or a drunken man trying to talk. I gave the command to fire and to fire again, and the beast tore out into the lake in its death-agony, and sank

With the remains of Dr McLennegan, I found the foregoing manuscript intact, and the torn fragments of the diary from which it was compiled, together with other papers on scientific subjects all of which I forward. I think some attempt should be made to secure the body of the elasmosaurus. It would be a priceless addition to any museum.

Arthur W. Fairchild,
Captain U.S.A.



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